



**Aruba**

**TODAY**

On Top Of The News Email: [news@arubatoday.com](mailto:news@arubatoday.com) website: [www.arubatoday.com](http://www.arubatoday.com) Tel: +297 582-7800 Tuesday, December 31, 2013



**Happy New Year's!**



*The Aruba Today Newspaper announces that due to the New Year's holidays, we will not be in circulation Wednesday, January 1st, or Thursday, January 2nd. We will be back on newsstands everywhere bright and early to serve our readers and advertisers first thing in the morning, Friday, January 3rd. Until then, the team at the Aruba Today Newspaper wishes you Happy New Year's!*



# Israel likes a party but is torn about New Year's

**DAN PERRY  
DANIEL ESTRIN**  
Associated Press

**JERUSALEM (AP)** — Happy New Year? Not so fast, if you're in Israel, where the somber, soul-searching and autumnal new year of the lunar Jewish calendar overshadows the Gregorian's Jan. 1. The highly diverse country certainly has its modern and hard-partying side. But even in such circles, where the pull of the outside world is strong, there is a sense, even as champagne is swilled, that New Year's Eve is someone else's party — indeed, maybe everybody else's. So while there will be plenty of festivities on Dec. 31 — especially in the vibrant and Western-oriented Tel Aviv area, home to one of the world's major high-tech hubs — almost everyone has to work the next day, giving the whole enterprise



A man walks past posters advertising a New Years Eve party in Tel Aviv, Israel, Monday, Dec. 30, 2013. In Israel, the somber, soul-searching and autumnal new year of the lunar Jewish calendar overshadows the Gregorian's Jan. 1.

(AP Photo/Oded Balilty)

a somewhat underground, guilt-ridden feel. Yossi Yosfan, 32, seemed to personify the mixed message: he was planning to attend a large party in Tel Aviv, but insisted that he didn't mind the absence of a public holiday in the morning. "It's not part of Israel's heritage," he said. "It doesn't need to be more than what it is." In hip neighborhoods like Tel Aviv's Florentin, street parties were planned, poster invitations were up and bars planned to be heaving till the early hours of January 1. But big hotels, of the kind where one might expect a fancy and lucrative affair, were distinctly subdued. "We open a champagne bottle in the lobby at midnight," but that is all, said Chen Michaeli, manager of Tel Aviv's Dan Panorama hotel. "We don't see this as a holiday that our religion relates to. We don't (consider) it right to mark it." One might ask why religion comes into it. Most Jewish Israelis are not especially traditional — few can remember their birthday by the Jewish calendar, and

the Gregorian calendar is the one that dominates most activity in the land. About a fifth of the population of 8 million are not Jews. Furthermore, New Year's in the rest of the world is a rather temporal affair. But the narrative that has set in here suggests otherwise, and as if to emphasize the "Christian" aspect Israelis call New Year's Eve the "Sylvester" — a term also used in some European countries which refers to fourth-century Pope Sylvester I who died on Dec. 31. President Shimon Peres, similarly, hosted a New Year reception Monday for Christian dignitaries in Israel. "It's nonsense," said Yisca Harani, an Israeli scholar of Christianity. "No one dances because of (Pope) Sylvester." Historians say New Year's Eve is not religious in origin, and contrary to occasional rumor here there is no evidence of anti-Semitic associations with Pope Sylvester.

Continued on page 27



# NEW ARRIVALS

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## At one NYC New Year's event, 3, 2, 1 ... shhh!

**JENNIFER PELTZ**  
**Associated Press**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Here comes 2014! Three! ... Two! ... Mum.

While hundreds of thousands of revelers cheer, shout and yell in the new year in Times Square, hundreds of New Yorkers will gather not far away to pass the waning hours of 2013 without a word. They'll be quietly observing a 25-year tradition at Jivamukti Yoga, which opens its doors to people who like to spend New Year's Eve reflecting, meditating, crafting resolutions, maybe doing a headstand, all in "Auld Lang" silence.

It's a year-end bash with no pressure to mingle, no need to bring anything, no drunken regrets, and no small talk — or big talk, either.

"The only thing that we ask," Jivamukti Yoga co-founder Sharon Gannon says, "is that you shut up."

If that sounds like a rather muted way to celebrate, participants say it's a refreshing one — a way to go out but look inward, and end the year on a note of mental tranquility.

Drawing on a long history of silent meditation in yoga, the event certainly isn't the only venue for people who are less interested in spirits than spirituality on New Year's Eve. Many churches hold reverent services on Dec.

31; the custom holds particular resonance for many black churches, where Watch Night observances commemorate the Dec. 31, 1862, services at which congregants awaited word that the Emancipation Proclamation would take effect. And some yoga and spiritual centers advertise multiday silent New Year events. That's regularly the most popular retreat at Yogaville in Buckingham, Virginia, which began the New Year's sessions about four decades ago and expected 65 people this year for more than four days of yoga, meditation, small tasks and listening to lectures, the Rev. Lakshmi Bartel said.

"People who come to Yogaville really want to live better, happier lives ... and New Year's is the perfect time" to focus on that, she said. The New York event requires a lesser time and financial commitment — it's free, while retreats can cost hundreds of dollars or more. It started in 1988 because students were disappointed that Jivamukti Yoga planned to close for New Year's, Gannon said.

"We wanted to celebrate New Year's Eve but didn't want to do it in a party-down kind of way," she said. Now, as many as 1,000 people come to the school on bustling Union Square,

about two miles (3.2 kilometers) south of Times Square, for at least part of the evening, and about 500 are usually there at midnight, Gannon said. After cutting loose

ing — as long as it's quiet and alcohol-free.

When the clock strikes midnight, the crowd greets the new year with a Sanskrit chant wishing universal

was pregnant and not up for partying.

"I was a bit intimidated, initially, by the idea of meditating for three hours," she said, but it turned out to be fun.



In this Dec. 31, 2012 photo, from left, Jivamukti Yoga teacher Tomo Okabe, MC Yogi, and his wife Amanda Gia participate in a Silent New Year's Eve celebration at the Jivamukti Yoga in New York. (AP Photo/Jivamukti Yoga, Derek Goodwin)

for an hour with a band that plays devotional Sanskrit chant music, participants hush up at 9 p.m. Even staffers use pencil and paper if they need to communicate. Participants do whatever comes to mind — yoga exercises, journal writing, read-

happiness and freedom, followed by some uplifting remarks from Gannon and co-founder David Life.

Karin Goldmark generally went to New Year's parties with friends before trying the Jivamukti Yoga event for the first time in 2006, when she

"It still feels like an event ... but it's not overwhelming. It's both calm and festive," said Goldmark, who works in education and now also teaches yoga at the school. "All the great stuff about New Year's Eve, and no hangover." □





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# Obama's presidency begins year 6 after failures

**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — President Barack Obama paused as he left the podium last January after his second inaugural address, taking one last glance across the crowd on the National Mall.

"I want to take a look, one more time," Obama said quietly. "I'm not going to see this again."

As he opened his second term with a confident call to action and an expansive liberal agenda, there were challenges ahead. He'd never heard of Edward Snowden, who would lay bare the U.S. government's massive surveillance program. Large-scale use of chemical weapons in Syria was only a threat. Obama's health care law, his signature achievement, seemed

poised to become reality. Obama had campaigned on the hope that a second term would bring in a new spirit of compromise. Instead, great expectations disappeared in mistakes and failures.

In 2013, opposition Republicans swore off compromise. Snowden's revelations had lawmakers from both top political parties calling for tighter surveillance rules. Brazil's president snubbed a proposed White House state dinner, and Germany's Angela Merkel was incensed that her cellphone calls had been intercepted.

The president's promise that people who liked their insurance plans would be able to keep them under the new health care law ran into a harsh reality as millions saw their coverage



President Barack Obama leaves the podium after his end-of-the-year news conference in the Brady Press Room at the White House in Washington, Friday, Dec. 20, 2013.

(AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

canceled. Obama's agenda of gun control, immigration reform and a grand budget agreement sits unfulfilled.

His job approval and personal favorability ratings are near the lowest point of his presidency, with increasing numbers of Americans saying they no longer consider him to be honest or trustworthy. Abroad, too, positive views of Obama have slipped.

White House communications director Jennifer Palmieri predicted better days ahead.

As Obama embarked on his second term, some of his closest outside advisers warned him over the next four years he might have just 18 months, perhaps as little as a year, to accomplish big domestic priorities. Obama's team thought it had a strategy for overcoming that. They would make a quick play for stricter gun control measures, then press for an immigration overhaul and float the possibility of a big budget deal. Each of those efforts failed, and Obama quickly found himself consumed by distractions. Some were fleeting, but others threatened long-term damage to his presidency: the National Security Agency surveillance disclosures and the disastrous rollout of the "Obamacare" health law.

Some events were beyond Obama's control, including the chemical weapons crisis in Syria. As a result, the president may have to be content with simply protecting his health care law and other Democratic-backed programs that Republicans are eager to repeal. The president's agenda for his sixth year in office is a stark reminder of how little he accomplished in 2013. Obama plans to make another try at immigration reform. He'll seek to increase the minimum wage, expand access to early childhood education and look to implement key climate changes. Foreign policy could be an oasis for the struggling president. With Russia's help, he turned his public indecision over attacking Syria into an unexpected agreement to strip President Bashar Assad of his chemical weapons, though the success of the effort won't be known for some time and the civil war in Syria rages on. Obama also authorized daring secret negotiations with Iran, resulting in an interim nuclear agreement. But even the president says the prospects of getting a final deal are only 50-50. □

# 2014

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Egan Column:

## Words For The Dumpster: Stay Classy 2013...

TIMOTHY EGAN

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With the last tick of 2013, let's throw out the most annoying, overused and abused words of the year. A few of these terms, "twerking" or "stay classy," die a natural death when someone like John McCain starts using them - the aural equivalent of a comb-over. Others need a push. Many of these words originated in the food world and would have been perfectly fine had they not migrated to the general population. Some came out of mid-management office talk. What these hapless clichés have in common is this: They have been so diluted by misuse that they've lost their meaning. And like bad holiday sweaters and Sarah Palin outrage, the following list is highly selective. To the Dumpster:- Artisan: Once the legitimate term for cheese makers with alternative grooming habits and creative body art, this word has been co-opted by all the wrong people selling all the wrong products. Toilet-cleaning chemicals. Convenience store "food" with pull dates



This image shows Will Ferrell as Ron Burgundy, left, and Christina Applegate as Veronica Corningstone in a scene from "Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues."

(AP Photo/Gemma LaMana)

measured in decades. This is what happens when farmers' markets fail to sue for copyright infringement. - Brand: A close second to artisan, used as a verb and a noun for self-promotion. It sprang from corporate marketing, and then went viral after every 9-year-old with a Facebook page or a Twitter handle began obsessing over how to shape random life events into a monetized narrative. It's

bad enough that politicians worry about their brand. But prisoners? - Gluten-free: It's a public service to warn the less than 1 percent of the population who suffer from celiac disease that bakery products might contain something that could make them sick. But putting this label on things that have no connection is a cynical corporate play for clueless consumers who buy something

simply because they think it's healthy. Red Bull boasts of being gluten-free. So is paint thinner. - Whatever: Long ago, "whatever" was a cover for inexpressive ignorance - Hitler invaded Poland and then, whatever. Now this word reigns as a facile dismissive: I know it's Mother's Day, but whatever. For the fifth year in a row, "whatever" was just rated the nation's most annoying word in a survey done by the Marist Institute for Public Opinion, beating out the hardy perennials "like" and "you know" and "just saying."- 24/7: No longer a byword for helpful availability, 24/7 evokes bad hours, poor pay and some customer service rep in India trying to explain an HDMI cable at 3 a.m. My bank is 24/7, or so they say; after a half-hour discussion with someone from this stellar institution, the "associate" said I should Google the problem. Well, yes, because Google is 24/7 in the only way that this term makes sense: It's robotic. - End of the day: A counter, seemingly, to the above dreary infinity. But think again: There is no end to the way that "end of the

day" has been used to signify anything but a close of business. No doubt, the rise of 24/7 has made end of the day impossible, at least in the news and public affairs cycle. President Barack Obama is a chronic abuser of "end of the day." Most recently, he used it to describe how his health care law would be viewed. Raises the question: What day are you talking about? - World-class: Makes the list because Donald Trump, who is decidedly not, has almost single-handedly run it into the ground. All of his casinos, golf courses, hotels and other concentrators of showy square-footage are world class, even those that ended up in bankruptcy. He is also self-declared in that realm. "I am the evidence," he said, attacking wind turbines in Scotland that threaten his golf interests. "I am a world-class expert in tourism." He promised that his world-class private investigators in Hawaii would expose the shocking truth of Obama's birth. A better use for them would be back in Scotland, on the Loch Ness case.q- Best practices:□



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## Credit scores from a test, not a history

**SARAH WHEATON**  
 © 2013 New York Times  
 No credit? No problem - just take a test. That's the message being delivered to more than 70,000 small-business owners in developing countries where credit ratings are rare and many potential entrepreneurs keep their money in cash rather than bank accounts. Banks in 16 countries are using a psychometric test to predict behavior - specifically, whether someone will pay back a loan. Originally a Harvard doctoral project, the Entrepreneurial Finance Lab's test has increasingly won the confi-

dence of risk-averse bankers in places where, many economists believe, credit bottlenecks are severely stunting growth. Now, a new partnership with MasterCard has potential to speed the model's proliferation. In the United States and other mature economies, assessments by multiple credit agencies based on a lifetime of bill payments and account balances help determine with relative confidence whether to give an individual or business a loan. But the lack of such data in much of the rest of the world creates a "mas-

sive inefficiency in emerging markets," said Bailey Klinger, 34, chief executive of Entrepreneurial Finance Lab. Banks have money to lend, but even profitable small businesses often cannot access it, choking growth. In 2006, Klinger was studying this problem, known as the "missing middle," with professor Asim Khwaja at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. They struck upon a technique some companies have long used to screen potential employees. For Jhonathan Darwin Montes Mendoza, a 40-minute test led to a



In a handout photo, Jhonathan Darwin Mendoza, who took a 40-minute test that led to a \$1,500 loan last year to buy Christmas-themed towels, curtains and other decorations, at his market stall in Lima, Peru. Where credit scores are rare, banks are using a psychometric test developed at Harvard to help lend to small-business owners.

(Natalia Carranza/The New York Times)

\$1,500 loan last year to buy Christmas-themed towels, curtains and other decorations ahead of the holiday rush for his market stall in Lima, Peru. Montes' score gave Banco Interamericano de Finanzas confidence he would pay back the loan - even though he had been in business less than a year, with no credit history. "You can't give a loan to someone without knowing if they have psychological problems," Montes, 23, said in Spanish, perhaps not understanding what the test was measuring. Though similar to tools used

by psychologists to assess IQ, define personalities or screen for addictions, the bank's test was intended to measure the traits at the core of entrepreneurship: fluid intelligence, business skill, integrity and attitudes. The program's early successes are "by no means final validation that the model will really work," said Peer Stein, a director at the World Bank's International Finance Corp., which administers the G-20 challenge grant. The test, he said, would "probably have to go through still other iterations." □

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## US Financial Front:

# Signed contracts to buy American homes level off



A sale pending announcement sits atop a for sale sign in a home's yard in Richardson, Texas. National Association of Realtors released its pending home sales index for November on Monday, Dec. 30, 2013. (AP Photo/LM Otero)

**C. S. RUGABER**  
AP Economics Writer

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The number of Americans who signed contracts to buy existing homes in November was essentially unchanged from October, suggesting sales are stabilizing after several months of declines. The National Association of Realtors said Monday that its seasonally adjusted pending home sales index

ticked up to 101.7 from 101.5 in October. The October figure was revised lower from an initial reading of 102.1. Higher mortgage rates and strong price gains over the past two years have slowed sales. The pending home sales index had fallen for five straight months before November. And completed sales of existing homes fell for three straight months, the Real-

tors said earlier this month. There is generally a one- to two-month lag between a signed contract and a completed sale.

The average interest rate on a 30-year mortgage edged higher to 4.48 percent last week, from 4.47 percent the previous week. Rates jumped about 1.25 percentage points from May through September, peaking at 4.6 percent.

That increase occurred after Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke indicated that the Fed would start to slow its bond-buying program before the end of the year.

Earlier this month, the Fed announced it will reduce its \$85 billion in monthly bond purchases by \$10 billion a month starting in January. The bond purchases are intended to push down longer-term interest rates and encourage more borrowing and spending.

Robert Kavcic, an economist at BMO Capital Markets, said that recent housing market indicators have been mixed. Applications for mortgages to purchase homes fell to a nearly two-year low last week, he said. Still, "we continue to believe that the U.S. housing market will absorb the upward move in mortgage

rates and push higher in 2014, helped by still-attractive affordability, better job growth and improved confidence in the recovery," Kavcic said.

Despite the recent declines, home re-sales should reach 5.1 million in 2013, the best total in seven years, the Realtors forecast. That's 10 percent higher than 2012's total of almost 4.7 million. But it's still below the 5.5 million that is consistent with a healthy housing market.

The Realtors forecast that sales will remain largely flat in 2014 and then rise to 5.3 million in 2015. Steady job gains should make it easier for more people to buy homes. And mortgage rates remain low by historical standards.

Signed contracts rose in the South and West last month, while falling in the Northeast and Midwest. □

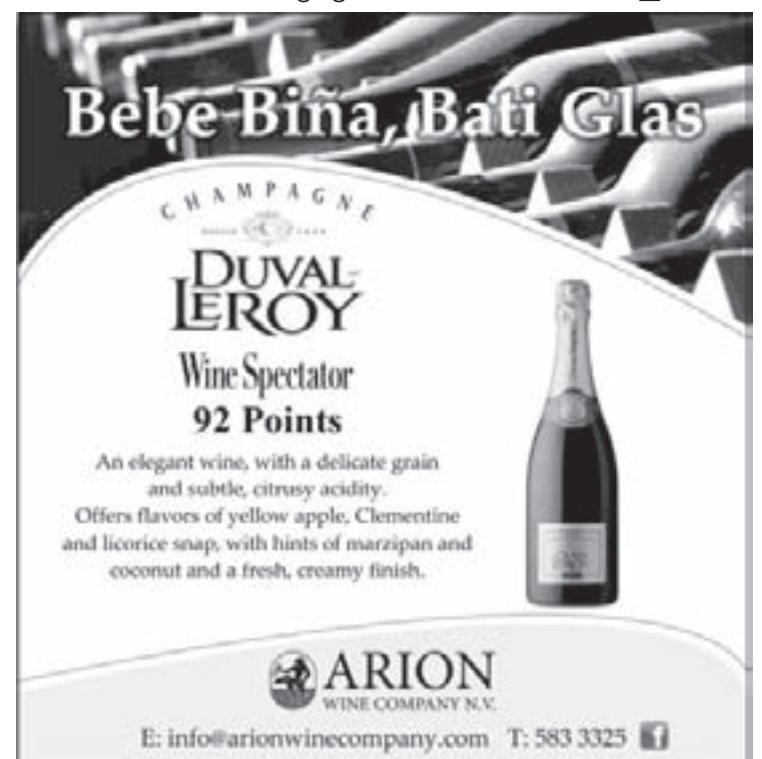
## Wells Fargo, Fannie Mae make \$591M deal

**SAN FRANCISCO (AP)** — Wells Fargo says it has made a \$591 million deal with Fannie Mae to settle obligations related to loans that went bad after the housing bubble burst. The deal announced Monday covers loans made through 2008.

Wells Fargo & Co. says it resolves nearly all repurchase liabilities it has with Fannie Mae, the federal mortgage buyer. After adjusting for other repurchases, San Francisco-based Wells Fargo will pay out \$541 million, which it says it had already set

aside. Wells Fargo agreed in September to pay \$869 million to Freddie Mac to settle similar claims.

Lenders including Bank of America, Citigroup and JPMorgan Chase have also agreed to settle mortgage claims with Fannie this year. □



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## Death toll rises in Russia; bombings raise Olympics concerns

**V. ISACHENKOV**  
**Associated Press**

**MOSCOW (AP)** — Two suicide bombings in as many days have killed 31 people and raised concerns that Islamic militants have begun a terrorist campaign in Russia that could stretch into the Sochi Olympics in February. Russian and international Olympic officials insisted the site of the games, protected by layers of security, is completely safe.

The attacks in Volgograd, about 400 miles (650 kilometers) from Sochi, reflected the Kremlin's inability to uproot Islamist insurgents in the Caucasus who have vowed to derail the games, the pet project of President Vladimir Putin.

No one has claimed responsibility for Sunday's blast at the Volgograd railway station or Monday's bus explosion in the city, but they came only months after Chechen rebel leader Doku Umarov threatened new attacks on civilian targets in Russia, including the Olympics.

In addition to the dead, the bombings wounded 104 people, according to Russia's Health Ministry. As of late Monday, 58 re-

mained hospitalized, many in grave condition.

Suicide bombings have rocked Russia for years, but the insurgents seeking to create an Islamic state have largely confined

themselves to the Caucasus region in recent years. The blasts in Volgograd signaled that militants want to show their reach outside their native region. Matthew Clements, an analyst at Jane's, said Caucasus militants could be targeting major transportation hubs like Volgograd to embarrass the Kremlin and discourage attendance at the Feb. 7-23 Olympics.

note. "Although the very strict security measures which will be in place at the Sochi Games will make it difficult to undertake a successful attack against the main Olympic venues,

head of the Carnegie Endowment's Moscow office, said in a commentary on the organization's website. A city of 1 million north-east of Sochi, Volgograd is a hub with railway lines running in five directions across the country and numerous bus routes connecting it to the volatile Caucasus provinces.

Security checks on buses have remained largely symbolic and easily avoidable, making them the transport of choice for terrorists in the region. And tighter railway security isn't always enough to prevent casualties. In Sunday's attack, a suicide bomber detonated an explosive in front of the train station's metal detectors, killing 17 people, including the attacker.

Security at Russia's railway stations and airports has been tightened after a male suicide bomber hit Moscow's Domodedovo Airport in January 2011, killing 37 people and injuring more than 180. Two bombings on the Moscow subway in March 2010 by female suicide bombers killed 40 people and wounded more than 120.

Umarov, who had claimed responsibility for the 2010 and 2011 bombings, ordered a halt to attacks on civilian targets during the mass demonstrations against Putin in the winter of 2011-12. He reversed that order in July, urging his men to "do their utmost to derail" the Sochi Olympics, which he described as "satanic dances on the bones of our ancestors." □



**Experts, firefighters and police officers examine a site of a trolleybus explosion in Volgograd, Russia Monday, Dec. 30, 2013. A bomb blast tore through the trolleybus in the city of Volgograd on Monday morning, killing at least 10 people a day after a suicide bombing that killed at 17 at the city's main railway station.**  
**(AP Photo/Denis Tyrin)**

their attacks to the North Caucasus region in recent years. The blasts in Volgograd signaled that militants want to show their reach outside their native region. Matthew Clements, an an-

"The attack demonstrates the militants' capability to strike at soft targets such as transport infrastructure outside of their usual area of operations in the North Caucasus," he said in a

public transport infrastructure in Sochi and the surrounding Krasnodar territory will face an elevated risk of attack."

Some experts say the perpetrators could also have been targeting Russia's pride by hitting the city formerly called Stalingrad, which is known for the historic battle that turned the tide against Nazi Germany. "Volgograd, a symbol of Russia's suffering and victory in World War II, has been singled out by the terrorist leaders precisely because of its status in people's minds," Dmitry Trenin, the



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**Israel:**

**Pairing of prisoner release and new settlements angers many**

© 2013 New York Times  
**JERUSALEM** - As Israel prepared to release another group of 26 long-serving Palestinian prisoners overnight Monday, and was expected to follow with another announcement of new construction in West Bank settlements, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faced withering criticism from all corners, including conservative members of his own coalition. Palestinian leaders threatened that any new settlement activity could lead them to seek membership and sue Israel in the International Criminal Court, a move they had promised not to take during peace

talks that started this summer. European diplomats warned the Israelis in high-level meetings over the past week against pairing the prisoner release with a construction announcement, as was done twice before. Even the Israeli right-wing forces that Netanyahu aimed to appease with the settlement initiative distanced themselves from the plan, denouncing any linkage between prisoners and construction as unfortunate or even immoral. "He is wrong because he tries to please all sides. The result is nobody is happy with his steps," said Eitan Haber, an Israeli commen-



prisoner Na'em al-Shawamreh and Arabic that reads his name and "the dean of the released prisoners, 20 years in captivity," during celebrations at the Palestinian headquarters in the West Bank city of Ramallah, Monday, Dec. 30, 2013. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faced a public uproar Monday over the impending release of more than two dozen Palestinian prisoners convicted in deadly attacks as part of a U.S.-brokered package to restart Mideast peace talks.

(AP Photo/Nasser Nasser)

tator, invoking a Hebrew idiom about how a bridegroom cannot dance at two weddings. Israeli news media reported that plans for 1,400 new housing units, including 600 in East Jerusalem, would be unveiled this week, as Secretary of State John Kerry is scheduled to make his 10th visit to the region to push for a peace agreement. Netanyahu, who agreed to release 104 Palestinian prisoners over nine months of negotiations rather than freeze settlement construction, said Monday that "the protection of settlement in the land of Israel" is one of the nation's "vital interests."

**Officials:**

**Lebanese fire on Syrian planes**

**DIAA HADID**  
**Associated Press**  
**BEIRUT (AP)** — The Lebanese army fired on Syrian aircraft that violated the country's airspace Monday, the first time Lebanon has done so since Syria's uprising broke out nearly three years ago, security officials said. The move suggests Beirut is trying to enforce greater respect for its borders in the hopes of slowing the expansion of the conflict into Lebanon, where it has exacerbated sectarian tensions and prompted shadowy groups to conduct attacks that have killed dozens this year. Also Monday, a U.N. official said at least 15 people have died of hunger-related illnesses in a besieged area of Damascus over the past four months. Lebanese officials said the military fired anti-aircraft

guns at two Syrian helicopters after they fired four missiles in a mountainous, barren area close to the eastern Lebanese town of Aarsal. Syrian aircraft have frequently conducted strikes near the frontier, sometimes hitting Lebanese territory. Beirut has protested but not responded with force. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak to the media. A Lebanese military official could not confirm the report, but said the army has orders to shoot anything — planes, tanks or troops — that violate Lebanese territory. The official spoke on condition of anonymity in line with policy. There was no comment from the Syrian government.



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# Uganda chief warns South Sudan rebel leader

**JASON STRAZIUSO  
RODNEY MUHUMUZA**  
Associated Press

**JUBA, South Sudan (AP)**  
— Uganda's president on

accused of mounting a failed coup in the world's newest country. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni told reporters to go for him, all of us," he said, referring to IGAD. A meeting of East African leaders last week said it "welcomed the commit-

fire that includes a way to monitor compliance. Violence since mid-December in South Sudan has displaced up to 180,000 people, the United Nations said Monday.

Uganda's influence is strong in South Sudan, where special forces from the neighboring country have been deployed at the request of South Sudan's President Salva Kiir, raising questions about the impartiality of Uganda as a possible mediator in a conflict that many fear could lead to civil war in the world's newest country. But France's ambassador to the United Nations said South Sudan's government has the right under international law to seek help from neighboring countries to defend itself.

"There is a government in South Sudan, which has the right to ask for another country to support its military efforts," said Gerard Araud, who is the U.N. Security Council president. He added that the Security Council "does not have a say" in whether South Sudan seeks such help.

Museveni and Kiir are strong allies. The Ugandan leader is believed to be concerned about the security implications for Uganda of a violent takeover of South Sudan's government.

For years the brutal warlord Joseph Kony, who once operated in the expansive jungle that now falls within South Sudan's territory, was a source of tension between Uganda and Sudan. Sudan's government faced persistent allegations of supporting Kony's rebellion against Uganda's government. Kony was forced to flee, and is thought to have fled to Congo and then Central African Republic, as the south moved closer to independence from Sudan.

South Sudan peacefully broke away from Sudan in 2011 after a decades-long fight for independence, giving Uganda a new sense of border security. Uganda, one of the South's strongest supporters in its quest for independence, denies it has taken sides in South Su-

dan's latest conflict, saying its forces provided security as Western countries and others safely evacuated their citizens from South Sudan.

Ugandan military spokesman Lt. Col. Paddy Ankunda insisted Monday that Ugandan forces are stationed only at the international airport in Juba and that their task is to "facilitate evacuation of civilians." But United Nations workers in Juba told The Associated Press that Ugandan troops have been guarding the only bridge that crosses the Nile River.

Although Juba is now calm, unrest persists in other parts of the country.

Col. Philip Aguer, the South Sudanese military spokesman, said Monday that, although there was "no major fighting" over the weekend, tension remained because "Machar has not committed himself to a cease-fire. We've not seen one." U.N. spokesman Martin Nesirky, however, said there was heavy fighting Sunday in Malakal, the capital of the oil-producing state Upper Nile. He said that while Kiir's government remains in control, the U.N. mission reported "significant battle damage in the city and widespread looting." He said 22,000 civilians have taken shelter in a U.N. compound there.

Pro-Machar forces still control Bentiu, the capital of South Sudan's other oil-producing state, Unity, and renegade troops are poised to attack Bor, the contested capital of Jonglei state, according to Aguer.

"There's a force advancing toward Bor," he said.

Machar has assured the U.N. representative to South Sudan, Hilde Johnson, that he is in control of the armed groups advancing toward Bor, according to Araud, the French ambassador, who spoke to reporters after the Security Council received a briefing from Johnson.

But Araud said the Security Council has "a lot of doubts" about Machar's claims. □



Displaced women, including foreigners, queue inside the United Nations camp where they have sought shelter in Malakal, South Sudan, Monday, Dec. 30, 2013.

(AP Photo/Ben Curtis)

Monday warned South Sudan's rebel leader against rejecting the government's offer of a cease-fire, saying regional leaders would unite to "defeat" the former vice president who is

in Juba, the South Sudan capital, that a regional bloc known as IGAD had given Riek Machar "four days to respond" to the cease-fire offer. "If he doesn't we shall have

ment" by South Sudan's government to cease hostilities against rebels and urged both sides to start peace talks by Tuesday. Machar instead called for a negotiated cease-



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# Venezuela inflation data questioned by economists

JOSHUA GOODMAN  
Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

— For three weeks Venezuelan economists have complained that the central bank is delaying delivery of its inflation report to hide the government's poor record of containing prices. Its release on Friday only fueled those suspicions. The report showed inflation slowing in the past two months and for the first time omitted data that track the level of shortages in South America's biggest oil economy. Critics say they don't buy the numbers and fear that the bank, long a redoubt of balance and credibility in polarized Venezuela, is caving to political pressure and losing its autonomy from President Nicolas Maduro's socialist government.

"It makes me very sad to read this report," said Asdrubal Oliveros, director of Caracas-based economic think tank Econanalitica. "It looks like propaganda written by the Information Ministry, not a technical report that you'd expect from a central bank."

Prices jumped 4.8 percent in November and 2.2 percent in December, according to the report. In October, prices jumped 5.1 percent.

As is customary, the report didn't provide an annualized rate of inflation. But Maduro, when asked about the omission at a press conference on Friday, conceded that prices rose 56.2 percent this year judging by the "bourgeoisie" methodology employed by the central bank's statisticians.

He defended the strident, ideological tone of the central bank's 10-page report, saying that if opponents hadn't waged an "economic war" in the aftermath of President Hugo Chavez's death in March, inflation would've ended 2013 under 10 percent.

"We've seen a speculative, induced inflation that exceeds the natural rules of the economy," Maduro told foreign reporters at the presidential palace.

Also missing from the re-



Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro holds a book emblazoned with an image of the late Hugo Chavez during a news conference at Miraflores presidential palace in Caracas, Venezuela, Monday, Dec. 30, 2013. Maduro said Monday that annual inflation hit 56.2 percent. Earlier the Central Bank said inflation slowed in the last two months of the year after Maduro took action to slash prices of appliances. The Central Bank justified a nearly three-week delay in issuing its report because of "exceptional and historic" measures taken by Maduro to fight price speculators trying to destabilize the country.

(AP Photo/Fernando Llano)

port is the closely-watched scarcity index, which in October showed a record 22 of 100 products were out of stock. The bank's report

goes to lengths to align itself with recent economic policies announced by Maduro, concluding that it's on the side of the Ven-

ezuelan people in its construction of socialism and a "new national economic order."

As such, the bank said 2014

is a "propitious" moment to review the methodology used to calculate the consumer price index, a sign to Oliveros that future reports will understate inflation much like Argentina's national statistics institute has been criticized for doing by the International Monetary Fund. □

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# American baseball players thriving in Venezuela

**JOSHUA GOODMAN**

**Associated Press**

**CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)**

— It's about six weeks before pitchers and catchers report to spring training in the U.S., but in Venezuela, the nation's fiercely competitive professional league is in full swing, and it's drawn the biggest contingent of American players in decades.

In the land of Hugo Chavez, a place in many ways hostile to Americans owing to its reputation for rampant crime, a crumbling economy and an anti-capitalist government, hitters and hurlers from across the U.S. are thriving as they try to impress big league scouts who flock here for the winter season.

It's not just about working on mechanics. Many come for the paycheck. While Venezuela's eight professional teams no longer can compete with major league salaries as they did during the oil-fueled economic boom of the 1960s, when Pete Rose wore a Caracas Leones jersey right after his rookie of the year season, they still pay from \$10,000 to \$20,000 a month, which can be two to three times what most players make in the U.S. minor leagues.

"Diapers aren't cheap," said C.J. Retherford, a 28-year-old Arizona native who made \$3,000 a month last season for the RedHawks of the sister cities of Fargo, North Dakota, and Moorhead, Minnesota. He now plays third base for the Tiburones, or Sharks, from the city of La Guaira outside Caracas — one of the nine "imports" the league allows each team to hire.

For players accustomed to the small crowds of minor league stadiums back home, the frequently sold out Estadio Universitario in Caracas can be daunting. Abundant servings of rum and whiskey and a nerve-rattling cacophony of drums pump up the 25,000 screaming fans who hang on every pitch.

"It's Friday night football every game, all the game," said Jamie Romak, a 28-year-old outfielder for



**In this Nov. 27, 2013 photo, C.J. Retherford, a 28-year-old Arizona native, nicknamed "El Conejo," or "the Rabbit," smiles during a warm-up before the start of a baseball game at Estadio Universitario in Caracas, Venezuela.**



**In this Nov. 27, 2013 photo, Tony DeFrancesco, center, a coach for the Houston Astros' AAA team who is making his managerial debut in Venezuela with La Guaira Tiburones, stands in the dugout during a baseball game against the Leones, at Estadio Universitario in Caracas, Venezuela.**

La Guaira who played for the St. Louis Cardinal's AAA team in Memphis, Tennessee. "You can have an eight run lead, blink your eyes twice and suddenly it's a one-run game."

Not everyone loves the experience. In addition to the challenges of playing abroad, from unfamiliar food to a foreign language, Venezuela presents its own set of daily problems.

Foremost is security. Bodyguards lurk near the dugout, keeping a close eye on Venezuelan big leaguers whose million-dollar contracts make them prime kidnapping targets. Nobody wants to become the next Wilson Ramos, the Washington Nation-



**In this Nov. 27, 2013 photo, Tiburones pitcher Ryan Kussmaul speaks by cellphone with his wife prior a baseball game against rival Leones at Estadio Universitario in Caracas, Venezuela.**

**Associated Press**

als catcher who was abducted in 2011 at gunpoint outside his family's home in Valencia. He was rescued two days later after a na-

but I just can't do it by myself here."

While the Americans are insulated from the worst

of Venezuela's economic woes, in the almost three months since the season started they've seen prices jump and store shelves go bare of basic goods as inflation soared above 50 percent and the nation's currency plunged to a tenth of its official value in a flourishing black market. Players cut from the roster sometime have to wait a week to find a flight out because Venezuelans trying to skirt rigid currency controls have bought up all the tickets. Then there was the home run derby at the All Star game, which abruptly ended after one batter due to a nationwide power outage.

Venezuela's politics are also a potential distraction. This year's season kicked off days after Chavez's successor, President Nicolas Maduro, expelled the top U.S. diplomat in the country, and anti-American graffiti dominates a wall next to the Caracas stadium's parking lot: "Not a dollar more for the capitalists." "You can't let the political situation affect your game. When you're on the field you have to tune it all out," said Omar Vizquel, one of Venezuela's best contributions to the big leagues. The former Cleveland Indians shortstop helped manage the Leones this season to prepare for his debut as an infield coach with the Detroit Tigers.

But for those who roll with the punches, Venezuela is a showcase for second chances and the pursuit of dreams.

Take Retherford. Last May, he was given a 50-game suspension after testing positive for an amphetamine, which he says he used to get going after long bus journeys. The Los Angeles Dodgers cut all ties with its former minor league all-star, and he ended up with the RedHawks, a team not affiliated with major league baseball, earning barely enough to support his family.

In Venezuela he's proven he still has some magic, batting .322 with 11 home runs and 44 RBI. □





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## Alhambra Casino Is Ready To Ring In The New Year!



**PUNTA BRABO** - Alhambra Casino is prepared for an exciting and exhilarating end of the year 2013 and ready to welcome 2014 with its traditional Balloon Drop event!

During this week, marketing team together with maintenance, slot, cashier, housekeeping, security, food and beverage y accounting, all get together

to blow more than 3,500 balloons and put them in nets hanging in the casino pit from one point to the other. There are many great prizes hidden in these balloons, such as weekend stay, cash, downloadable credits, dinners, baskets and much more.

Tonight, December 31 at 11:45pm, all casino operations will stop for around



half an hour. Friends and family can join the Alhambra employees outside to say goodbye to year 2013 and look at the fireworks all around the island. Then everybody is welcome in the casino for a champagne toast and Happy New Year wishes. At exactly 1am we will let loose the two nets and all the balloons will fall on the casino floor. Catch one of these balloons,

break it and see if you are one of the lucky winners of the fabulous prizes hidden in the balloons. We want to express our sincere gratitude to the many businesses that have cooperated with the balloon drop of this year. Without their help and cooperation the balloon drop would have been not possible. Your gestures are well appreciated. A special Thank you

goes also to our surrounding resorts with their cooperation. Alhambra casino takes this opportunity to say thank you to entire Aruban community, our loyal visitors from around the world and all the employees for their support during 2013. There are more surprises coming up in 2014. Thank you for choosing Alhambra as your favorite casino! □





# Loyal visitors honored at the Divi Phoenix Beach Resort!



**PALM BEACH** - Recently the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring a group of loyal and friendly Visitors of Aruba, at the Divi Phoenix Beach Resort, as Distinguished Visitors and Ambassadors of Goodwill. The symbolic honorary title is presented in the name

of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for 10-to-19 and 20-or-more consecutive years. The honorees were Arthur and Paula Weinstein of Berlin, New Jersey, Peter and Stella Kalos of Farmingville, New York, Marshall and Grace Smith of Portsmouth,

Virginia and Sandee Fagin of New London, Connecticut. All the honorees are loyal members of the Divi Phoenix and they love Aruba very much because of the friendly people, the climate, beaches, restaurants, Casinos and Aruba feels like a second home, the people are like a family



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to them and the Divi Phoenix is their home away from home. The certificates were presented by Ernest Giel representing the Aruba Tourism Authority together with Mrs. Avril representing the Divi Phoenix. □





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**PALM BEACH** – Today, Tuesday December 31st, the Marriott will light its 12 million+ pagara at 2:30pm. We would like to welcome everyone to join us as we celebrate another successful year and end 2013 with a BIG BANG!

The pagara will be lit at 2.30 pm on Tuesday, starting at the Main Entrance Marriott Surf Club, leading to the Ocean Club Parking Lot and the Stellaris Casino Parking Front Drive Resort Side Entrance Resort, where it ends with a huge bang!

We look forward to seeing you all there today to celebrate the New Year! □

**Loyal visitors honored at the Marriott Ocean Club!**



**PALM BEACH** - Recently the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring two very nice

couples, whom are loyal and friendly Visitors of Aruba, at the Marriott Ocean Club as Distinguished Visitors. The symbolic honorary titles are presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for 10-to-19 consecutive years.

The honorees were Rick and Peggy Thompson of Red Wing, Minnesota and Fred and Lola Springer of Olney, Maryland. The honorees are loyal members of the Marriott Ocean Club and they love Aruba very much because of the friendly people, the climate, beaches, restau-

rants, and being on Aruba and staying at the Ocean Club is like being home for them. The certificates were presented by Ernest Giel representing the Aruba Tourism Authority together with Lisette Bouwman, Lilian Britten and Erwin Noguera GM at the Marriott Ocean Club. □

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## Black Monday: 5 NFL coaches already fired

**BARRY WILNER**

**AP Pro Football Writer**

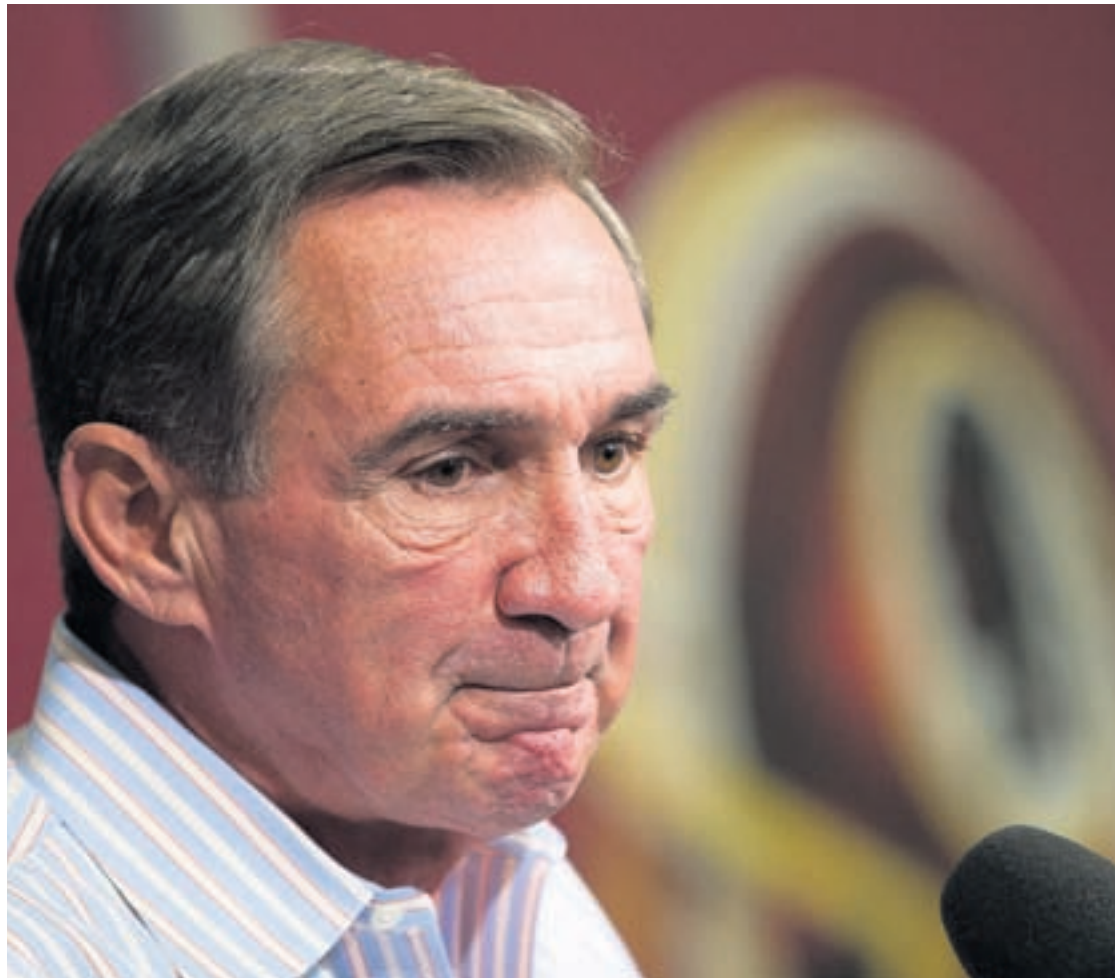
**It didn't take long.**

Barely 12 hours after the NFL's regular season ended, five head coaches were unemployed. Fired on Monday were Washington's Mike Shanahan, Detroit's Jim Schwartz, Minnesota's Leslie Frazier and Tampa Bay's Greg Schiano. The Cleveland Browns didn't even wait that long, dismissing Rob Chudzinski on Sunday night after just one season on the job.

Shanahan, who won two Super Bowls in Denver in the 1990s, spent four seasons with the Redskins and was 24-40. Frazier had a little more than three seasons with the Vikings to compile an 18-33-1 mark, and Schwartz coached the Lions for five seasons, finishing 29-52.

Schiano only got two years with the Buccaneers, going 11-21. He had three years and \$9 million left on his contract.

Tampa Bay also fired



Former Washington Redskins head coach Mike Shanahan delivers a statement after he was fired Monday, Dec. 30, 2013 at Redskins Park, in Ashburn, Va. Shanahan was fired after a morning meeting with owner Dan Snyder and general manager Bruce Allen.

Associated Press

general manager Mark Dominik.

"It's tough for the players to see your coaches go. You never want to see anybody get fired," Pro Bowl defensive tackle Gerald McCoy said. "Me personally, I haven't had any, consistently, in my career. Third head coach, going on my fifth year and three head coaches. Add up everybody, it'll be six D-line coaches." The Buccaneers, who also have fired the likes of Tony Dungy and Jon Gruden, hired Schiano out of Rutgers in 2012 and went 6-4 before losing five of their last six games. They dropped their first eight games this season and finished 4-12.

One coach allegedly on the hot seat was retained: Rex Ryan, who has one more year on his contract, is staying with the New York Jets after a surprising 8-8 record in his fifth season at the helm.

Continued on Page 20



In a Sunday, Dec. 1, 2013 file photo, Minnesota Vikings head coach Leslie Frazier stands on the field before an NFL football game against the Chicago Bears, in Minneapolis.

Associated Press

**By BERNIE WILSON**

**AP Sports Writer**

**SAN DIEGO (AP)** -- The NFL acknowledged that referees erred in not penalizing the San Diego Chargers for an illegal formation on a missed 41-yard field goal attempt by Ryan Succop of the Kansas City Chiefs with 4 seconds left in regulation on Sunday. Succop was wide right on

the kick, and the Chargers went on to win 27-24 in overtime to claim the AFC's final playoff spot. The Pittsburgh Steelers would have been in the postseason had Kansas City won the game.

San Diego lined up with seven men on one side of the snapper, and NFL rules state no more than six players can be on the line of

## NFL says officials erred on KC's missed field goal

scrimmage on either side of the snapper.

The NFL said in a statement Monday that the penalty should have been called by referee Bill Leavy's crew, moving the ball 5 yards closer to the end zone and giving Succop another attempt at the game-winning field goal. Succop was 15 of 16 this season from within 40 yards.

The NFL did not say whether Leavy's crew would be disciplined.

"We misaligned on it. I'm not going to deny it," Chargers rookie coach Mike McCoy said Monday. "But hey, those calls all balance

themselves out over the year. They're part of the game. We're all human. ... Things happen for a reason. We didn't do it on purpose, I can tell you that."

Chiefs coach Andy Reid actually called his final timeout after the missed field goal and tried to convince the officiating crew of the illegal formation. But because illegal formations are not reviewable, Reid had no other recourse and the play stood.

"I called a timeout right there.

That was for a reason," Reid said. "I couldn't challenge, all I had was a time-

out, so maybe they'd take a peek and read through the timeout and see what took place, but listen, human error. ... There's not much more you can say."

The outcome of the game didn't have any bearing on the Chiefs, who rested most of their starters.

Kansas City was already assured of the No. 5 seed in the AFC playoffs and will head to Indianapolis on Saturday for a rematch of a game won two weeks ago by the Colts.

The result had significant repercussions for the Chargers and Steelers, though. □



# Doctors give no prognosis for Michael Schumacher

**GRAHAM DUNBAR**  
**SARAH DILORENZO**  
**Associated Press**  
**GRENOBLE, France (AP)**

— Doctors offered a grim assessment of Michael Schumacher's head injuries Monday, providing no prognosis for the Formula One driving great after his skiing accident in the French Alps.

Schumacher has been placed in a medically induced coma to relieve pressure on his brain, which suffered bruising and bleeding when the retired seven-time world champion fell and struck a rock Sunday while skiing during a family vacation.

"We cannot predict the future for Michael Schumacher," Dr. Jean-Francois Payen, the doctor in charge of Grenoble University Hospital's intensive care unit, said at a news conference.

"He is in a critical state in terms of cerebral resuscita-

tion," said Payen, the chief anesthesiologist treating the 44-year-old German driver. "We are working hour by hour."

Schumacher's wife, Corinna, daughter Gina Maria and son Mick were at his bedside.

"The family is not doing very well, obviously. They are shocked," his manager, Sabine Kehm, told reporters.

Schumacher earned universal admiration for his uncommon driving talent, which led to a record 91 race wins. His single-minded dedication to victory sometimes meant he was denied the same affection during his career that he received Monday.

Schumacher "gave the image of someone indestructible, powerful," France's four-time F1 champion Alain Prost said on iTele TV channel. "It's a banal accident compared to what he's done in the past. It's

just a dumb thing that ended badly."

Schumacher and his 14-year-old son were skiing Sunday morning in the French Alpine resort of Meribel, where the family has a chalet. He fell and hit the right side of his head on a rock.

By wearing a helmet, Schumacher had given himself a chance of survival, Payen said, though the protection was not enough to prevent serious injury.

Gerard Saillant, a trauma surgeon who operated on Schumacher when he broke his leg in a 1999 race crash, was at the hospital as a visitor. He told reporters that Schumacher's age and fitness should work in his favor.

Schumacher, who turns 45 on Friday, retired from the track for the second time only last year, after a three-season comeback.

Still, the hospital's neurology team, which is recog-

nized as among the best in France, was cautious about Schumacher's prospects.

Doctors lowered his body temperature to between

The hospital, in a city that is the gateway to the French Alps, sees a large number of skiing accidents every year.

Schumacher has been se-



In this March 12, 2010 file photo Mercedes Grand Prix driver Michael Schumacher of Germany is pictured in the pits during the first practice session at the Formula One Bahrain International Circuit in Sakhir, Bahrain. Associated Press

34 and 35 degrees Celsius (93.2 to 95 degrees Fahrenheit) as part of the coma, which essentially rests the brain, slowing its metabolism to help reduce inflammation after an injury.

riously hurt before. In addition to the broken leg in a crash at the 1999 British Grand Prix, he also suffered neck and spine injuries after a motorcycle accident in 2009 in Spain. □



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# Warriors top Cavs in OT, extend run to 5

**The Associated Press**

**CLEVELAND (AP)** — Stephen Curry scored 29 points and made a clutch jumper with 13.5 seconds left as the Golden State Warriors opened a long road trip with their fifth straight victory, 108-104 in overtime against the Cleveland Cavaliers on Sunday.

NBA Capsules Curry overcame a poor shooting performance after halftime, and nearly recorded a triple-double by adding 11 assists and nine rebounds. Curry was just 2 of 12 from the floor in the second half and OT.

David Lee scored 19 before fouling out for the Warriors, who are on the road for seven games over the next 13 days.

Kyrie Irving scored 27 for Cleveland, which dropped its fifth straight and lost its third tight game in a row. The Cavs lost by three in Boston on Saturday and two in double-overtime against Atlanta on Thursday.



**Golden State Warriors' Stephen Curry, top left, passes the ball around Cleveland Cavaliers' Anderson Varejao, second from left, from Brazil, and Tristan Thompson, right, from Canada, during the fourth quarter of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Dec. 29, 2013, in Cleveland. The Warriors defeated the Cavaliers 108-104 in overtime.**

**Associated Press**

THUNDER 117, ROCKETS 86 Kevin Durant had 33 points, 13 rebounds and five assists, and Oklahoma City won its second straight game without Russell Westbrook, beating Houston.

Jeremy Lamb added a career-high 22 points and five assists for Oklahoma City, which has the NBA's best record at 25-5. The Thunder have won 12 of their last 13 and 20 of their last 22

games.

Reggie Jackson, starting in Westbrook's place, had 16 points and eight assists.

Aaron Brooks had 17 points and Chandler Parsons scored 15 for Houston, which was playing its fourth game in five days. The Rockets, who had a three-game winning streak snapped, missed their first 12 shots and shot 36.5 percent from the field (31 of 85).

SPURS 112, KINGS 104

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Manu Ginobili scored 28 points, Tony Parker added 22, and Tim Duncan had 17 points and 13 rebounds to lead San Antonio over Sacramento.

Boris Diaw had 14 points and Tiago Splitter added 11 for San Antonio (24-7).

DeMarcus Cousins had 29 points and 14 rebounds, Isaiah Thomas added 27 points and Rudy Gay had 24 for Sacramento (9-20).

Struggling mightily on defense for much of the second half, the Spurs turned

to their Big Three to close out the upstart Kings.

Ginobili, Duncan and Parker scored San Antonio's final 21 points in a 23-8 run to close the game.

MAGIC 109, HAWKS 102

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Aron Afflalo scored 21 points and Orlando beat Atlanta to give the Magic back-to-back victories for just the third time this season.

Jeff Teague scored 22 points for the Hawks in their second game without two-time All-Star Al Horford, who is out indefinitely with a torn right pectoral muscle. The Hawks were also coming off three straight, grinding overtime games, the latest of which was Saturday night at home against Charlotte.

The Hawks made the game's first bucket, a 3-pointer, but then trailed until a spurt in the fourth quarter gave them a three-point lead. But a 9-0 run midway through the final quarter put Orlando in control for good. □

## Black Monday

Continued from Page 18

While some of the fired coaches might have seen it coming, Chudzinski certainly didn't despite going 4-12 and losing his final seven games and 10 of 11.

"I was shocked and disappointed to hear the news that I was fired," said Chudzinski, who grew up a Browns fan. "I am a Cleveland Brown to the core, and always will be. It was an honor to lead our players and coaches, and I appreciate their dedication and sacrifice. I was more excited than ever for this team, as I know we were building a great foundation for future success."

As the coaching searches begin, agents will float the names of their clients — Penn State's Bill O'Brien seems to be the hottest candidate and has interviewed for Houston's vacancy. The Texans (2-14), who own the top choice in May's draft after losing their final 14 games, re-



**In a Sunday, Dec. 15, 2013 file photo, Tampa Bay Buccaneers head coach Greg Schiano watches during the first quarter of an NFL football game against the San Francisco 49ers, in Tampa, Fla.**

**Associated Press**

leased coach Gary Kubiak late in the season.

Whoever gets hired in each place will face mammoth rebuilding projects. Overall, the six teams seeking new coaches went 24-71-1.

Shanahan had one season remaining on a five-year contract worth about \$7 million a season. He blamed salary cap restraints for part

of the Redskins' collapse from NFC East champion in 2012 to 3-13 and eight consecutive losses.

Washington was hit with a \$36 million salary cap penalty over two seasons for dumping salaries into the 2010 uncapped season, and Shanahan said it prevented the team from pursuing free agents it had

targeted.

But his real undoing, along with the poor records in three of his four seasons, was a contentious relationship with star quarterback Robert Griffin III. RG3 did not speak with the media on Monday.

Frazier took over for Brad Childress in Minnesota for the final six games of 2010.

He got the Vikings to the playoffs as a wild card last season, riding an MVP year from running back Adrian Peterson. But he never solved the Vikings' quarterback situation — three QBs started in 2013 — and the defense, Frazier's specialty, ranked 31st overall and against the pass.

"It's a harsh business," safety Harrison Smith said. "As a player, we all love coach Frazier, as a coach, as a man. You can't meet a better guy. And also as a player, we didn't make enough plays on the field. So you just feel like you let him down a little bit."

The Lions were considered an underachieving team the last two years under Schwartz. After a 6-3 start this year in a division where the Packers and Bears lost their starting quarterbacks for lengthy periods, Detroit fell apart down the stretch. It lost six of its last seven.

He had two years and almost \$12 million remaining on his deal, signed after the Lions hired him to fix a team that went 0-16 in 2008. □



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## Neal's 3 goals, 2 assists power Pens past CBJ

**The Associated Press**  
**COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)** — James Neal scored three times and had two assists, and Sidney Crosby scored the go-ahead goal and set up two other tallies to lead the Pittsburgh Penguins past the Columbus Blue Jackets 5-3 on Sunday night.

NHL Capsules Chris Kunitz added his 21st goal and two assists, and Jeff Zatkoff made 25 saves for the Penguins, who have won all four meetings with Columbus this season.

Neal scored twice on the power play, including his third goal of the night and 14th of the season with 2:27 left — giving him a career-high five points.

Brandon Dubinsky, Corey Tropp and Nikita Nikitin scored for the Blue Jackets before their biggest home crowd of the season, 18,871. Nikitin also had an assist.

**SABRES 2, CAPITALS 1, SO BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP)** — Ryan Miller made 49 saves to carry Buffalo to a shootout win over Washington.

Drew Stafford netted Buffalo's goal in regulation, and Steve Ott scored the lone shootout goal in the sixth round as the Sabres improved to 5-0-1 in their last six home games after starting 3-12-1 there.

Miller stopped all six Washington shootout attempts. Philipp Grubauer made 16 saves for Washington, and Troy Brouwer scored the Capitals' only goal. Alex Ovechkin recorded 12 shots, but failed to earn a point.

Washington had the first 12 shots on goal, and with 13:52 gone, Miller stopped Eric Fehr from point-blank range to keep the Capitals off the board. Buffalo final-

ly put a shot on Grubauer with 4:23 left in the first. Matt D'Agostini's odd-angle snap shot was met with a loud cheer from the home crowd.

**SHARKS 3, DUCKS 1 SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP)** — Bracken Kearns scored his first NHL goal, Logan Couture netted his 100th, and San Jose broke Anaheim's 10-game winning streak.

Brent Burns added a goal for the Sharks, who won their fourth straight. Antti Niemi stopped 30 shots in his 21st win of the season.

Patrick Maroon scored for the Ducks, who lost for the first time in December and missed a chance for a club-record, seven-game winning streak on the road. Frederik Anderson made 20 saves but lost for the second time in 11 games this season.

Anaheim, which entered the game as the NHL's top team, also had a 13-game point streak stopped.

Burns has eight points in his last seven games against the Ducks. The Sharks scored in the first 90 seconds of a game for the ninth time this season.

**PANTHERS 4, CANADIENS 1 SUNRISE, Fla. (AP)** — Brian Campbell, Aleksander Barkov and Dmitry Kulikov all scored in Florida's win over Montreal.

Sean Bergenheim added an empty-net goal with 17 seconds left. Tom Gilbert had two assists. Kulikov's goal was his first in 28 games.

Scott Clemmensen stopped 21 shots for the Panthers, who broke a three-game losing streak and beat Montreal for the second time this month. Clemmensen is 8-1 against the Canadiens.

Brandon Prust scored and



**Dallas Stars left wing Jamie Benn (14) checks St. Louis Blues center Vladimir Sobotka (17) in front of the Stars bench during the first period of an NHL hockey game, Sunday, Dec. 29, 2013, in Dallas.**

**Associated Press**

Peter Budaj made 21 saves for Montreal, which lost for the first time in three games.

The Canadiens had two goals disallowed.

**BLUES 3, STARS 2, OT DALLAS (AP)** — Kevin Shattenkirk scored a power-play goal 4:49 into overtime, giving St. Louis a victory over Dallas.

Jaden Schwartz had a goal in his fifth straight game, and T.J. Oshie also scored for the Blues, who improved to 12-0-1 against Central Division opponents. Brian Elliott made 28 saves.

Dallas overcame a 2-0 deficit with second-period goals by Jamie Benn and Ryan Garbutt.

Schwartz opened the scoring on a power play at 2:41 of the first.

St. Louis scored off a Stars

mistake at 5:12 of the second when Oshie picked up the puck after Kevin Connaughton whiffed on a pass in his end.

**RANGERS 4, LIGHTNING 3 TAMPA, Fla. (AP)** — Henrik Lundqvist made 37 saves in his first start in four games, and Mats Zuccarello had a goal and two assists in the New York Rangers victory over Tampa Bay.

Lundqvist watched from the bench as backup Cam Talbot started the previous three games, winning two, after Lundqvist struggled through a 1-4-2 stretch.

Rick Nash, Chris Kreider and Benoit Pouliot also scored for the Rangers, who had three power-play goals. Ryan McDonagh and Derick Brassard had two assists each.

Tampa Bay got goals from Tyler Johnson, Ondrej Palat and Valteri Filppula.

The Rangers went up 4-2 on second-period power-play goals by Kreider and Pouliot.

**ISLANDERS 5, WILD 4 ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP)** — Kyle Okposo scored twice midway through the third period, and the New York Islanders overcame a three-goal deficit to beat Minnesota. □

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# Sharapova returns with convincing win in Brisbane

**JOHN PYE**

**AP Sports Writer**

**BRISBANE, Australia (AP)**

— Every point mattered for Maria Sharapova in her competitive comeback from injury, even in a first-round match in the season-opening tournament. Sharapova beat 74th-ranked Caroline Garcia of France 6-3, 6-0 Monday, ripping forehand winners and nullifying her rival's biggest weapon with consistently aggressive service returns. She chased down balls to turn the tempo when she was behind in two games in the second set, and celebrated break points with triple fist pumps even when the result was well beyond doubt. The four-time major winner played only one match following an early exit at Wimbledon last season due to a right shoulder injury. She showed no signs of soreness in advancing to the second round at the Brisbane International, her only warm-up event for the Australian Open. "It's been four months ... (so) it was a big step for me. It was a big step to come and a big step to play out there tonight,"



**Maria Sharapova of Russia plays a shot in her match against Caroline Garcia of France during the Brisbane International tennis tournament in Brisbane, Australia, Monday, Dec. 30, 2013.**

**Associated Press**

Sharapova said, adding that she was pain-free and feeling good. "These matches are what I came here for. No matter the opponent or the situation, you know, they're really priceless for me at this point, and extremely important." The third-seeded Sharapova hit 26 winners and kept the unforced errors to 10, hitting six aces and only one double-fault — immediately after a backhand winner down the line had given her triple match point.

She will next play 17-year-old Australian qualifier Ashleigh Barty, who had 6-3, 7-5 win over 2012 Brisbane finalist Daniela Hantuchova. Also advancing were fourth-seeded Jelena Jankovic, who beat 2010 French Open champion Francesca Schiavone 6-2, 7-6 (6), No. 5 Angelique Kerber, No. 8 Carla Suarez and No. 9 Dominika Cibulkova. Sharapova's boyfriend, fifth-seeded Grigor Dimitrov, beat Robin Haase of the Netherlands 6-2, 6-3 in the

day's last match on center court. The star on the men's side is Roger Federer, who has been working with Stefan Edberg in preparation for the Australian Open. After failing to win a Grand Slam title in 2013, the 17-time major winner is the latest in a line of highly-ranked players who have hired past greats as coaches in the wake of Andy Murray's success with Ivan Lendl. Novak Djokovic recently announced a partnership with Boris Becker — a move that surprised Federer. "Not necessarily that he hired somebody ... But Becker I was surprised," Federer said. "I didn't think he wanted to become a coach. I didn't expect to see him back on tour." "I'm happy seeing former greats and legends excited to be doing such a job and wanting to help the next generations. To bring them back into the game, it's a good thing." In men's first-round matches, Sam Querrey upset seventh-seeded Dmitry Tursunov 7-5, 6-4, Marin Cilic had a 6-7 (3), 7-6 (5), 6-4 win over Denis Istomin and Jarkko Nieminen beat local hope James

Duckworth 6-2, 6-3. At the Hopman Cup in Perth, Sloane Stephens and John Isner gave the United States a 3-0 win over Spain. Stephens, who beat Serena Williams en route to the 2013 Australian Open semifinals, won nine of the last 10 games in a 6-3, 6-1 victory over Anabel Medina Garrigues in the singles before Isner beat Daniel Munoz-de La Nava 6-3, 6-4. Stephens and Isner then combined to win the mixed doubles as Spain slumped to back-to-back 3-0 defeats. France also won, beating the Czech Republic 2-1. Jo-Wilfried Tsonga defeated Radek Stepanek 6-1, 6-4, but Petra Kvitova evened the score by beating Alize Cornet 6-1, 3-6, 7-5. Cornet and Tsonga then beat Kvitova and Stepanek 6-1, 6-3. At the ASB Classic tournament in Auckland, New Zealand, Venus Williams beat Andrea Hlavackova 6-3, 7-6 (1) in her opening match. Other first-round winners included Yvonne Meusburger, who beat seventh-seeded Mona Barthel 6-4, 6-3, and fifth-seeded Jamie Hampton. □

# Davis, Richardson win 1,000 at speedskating trials

**PAUL NEWBERRY**

**AP National Writer**

**KEARNS, Utah (AP)**

— Shani Davis will be heading to Sochi aiming to win a third gold medal in the 1,000 meters, an event he describes as "one of my babies." The two-time defending Olympic champion edged Brian Hansen by a hundredth of a second to win at the U.S. speedskating trials on Sunday. At age 31 and likely preparing for his final Winter Olympics, Davis is already assured of being remembered as one of the greats of the sport. He's not ready to slow down just yet. "I'm the older brother to all these young guys," he said. "I'm just trying to keep them at bay. They're nipping at me." Davis has locked up at least two events in Sochi, also claiming a spot in the 500, and is favored in the still-to-come 1,500, the other of his "babies" and the



**Shani Davis competes in the men's 500 meters during the U.S. Olympic speedskating trials Saturday, Dec. 28, 2013, in Kearns, Utah. Davis finished in fourth place.**

**Associated Press**

race that produced silver medals in Turin and Vancouver. In addition, there's a chance he'll take part in the team pursuit, a race he passed on at previous Olympics because he didn't want to affect preparations for his individual events. After gliding along patiently on the backstretch, hands clasped behind his

back during a two-minute television commercial break that delayed the start of the next-to-last pairing, Davis powered around the final turn for a time of 1 minute, 7.52 seconds. Hansen came up just short in the final group, crossing the stripe in 1:07.53. Hansen respects what Davis means to the sport, but he's eager to make his mark in Sochi. "It's exciting for me," Hansen said. "I'm happy for Shani that he's going for such a great achievement. But at the same time, I'm hoping I can put down my best race come Sochi. That's the nature of sport." On the women's side, Heather Richardson beat Brittany Bowe in the 1,000 — a repeat of their 1-2 finish in the 500 on Saturday. The other two projected spots on the Olympic team went to Sugar Todd and Kelly Gunther, the latter completing her comeback from a grie-

some ankle injury shortly after she just missed making the Vancouver Olympics. Bowe is the world-record holder in the 1,000, setting the mark of 1:12.58 at the oval in suburban Salt Lake City just last month. She didn't come close to that time at the trials, settling for the second spot in 1:13.93 and conceding she was worn down a bit after the grueling World Cup schedule. Richardson's winning time was 1:13.23. She and Bowe will go to Sochi as the favorites in the 1,000 — a role that Richardson relishes. "Just remember to take deep breaths and relax and have fun," she said. "That's when I skate my best." Davis knows what it's like to be an Olympic favorite. In Sochi, he will attempt to become the first male skater to win the same speedskating event at three straight Olympics. Bonnie Blair of the U.S. and Germany's Claudia Pechstein are the only skaters

to pull off a three-peat — Blair winning the 500 in 1988, 1992 and 1994, while Pechstein took the 5,000 title in 1994, 1998 and 2002. Further back in the standings, everyone cheered the gutsy performance turned in by Jonathan Garcia, who was disqualified the previous day in the 500 for not wearing his timing transponders, after skating fast enough to make the Olympic team. The Texan came back to finish fourth in the 1,000 at 1:07.96, good enough again to claim the first Olympic berth of his career. This time is counted. Garcia smiled and held up a transponder in each hand for the cheering crowd at the Utah Olympic Oval. No way he was forgetting the devices this time. "I really didn't think about it," Garcia said. "In my mind, I truly believed that I already made the team. I had skated fast enough to be on the team." □



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# Review: New camera phones notable in 2013

ANICK JESDANUN

AP Technology Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — As I look back at the more than 100 tech products we reviewed in 2013, a handful of gadgets and services deserve a second look.

It's become clear that one brand rarely stands out any more in whatever product category you look at. Competition is more intense than ever, which means consumers have more choices than ever. That's why coming up with a "best of" list for 2013 proved difficult.

So instead of a comprehensive list, I'm highlighting five big trends. These are also areas where further innovations are likely in 2014, so stay tuned.

— Better camera phones. This was the first year I didn't mind leaving my point-and-shoot and full-bodied, SLR cameras at home. Camera phones have gotten good enough to stand in for those stand-alone cameras in many situations.

Of the ones I tried, Apple's iPhone 5S proved to be the best as an all-around camera. It's good at getting the auto-focus right, even for moving objects. A larger sensor and an improved flash compared with previous models mean better shots in low light.

An honorable mention goes to Nokia's Lumia 1020. It's consistently good at night and indoor shots. It combines the small amount of light from multiple pixels into one, resulting in better lighting. It also has manual controls typically absent from camera phones.

Given how frequently people use their phones to take photos, expect even more improvements in the



Serkan Ozsarac, from Turkey, cuddles with his girlfriend Beyza Buyuker, from Chicago, as they take a cell phone camera portrait on Chicago's Magnificent Mile Tuesday, Oct. 15, 2013, in Chicago.

Associated Press

coming year.

— Personalized technical support.

It used to be when you couldn't figure out how a product worked, you called your tech-savvy children. With Mayday on Amazon's new Kindle Fire HDX tablets, you no longer need to do that. Instead, just tap the Mayday button, and you'll be connected to a live customer service representative within seconds, even at 4 a.m. on a weekend.

Amazon's representatives can help you install apps, connect to Facebook or tackle anything else confounding you. You see them on the screen, but they can only hear you. They have a virtual orange marker to point you to buttons and menus on the screen. They also can take over your machine remotely and do it for you.

As gadgets do more, they also get more complicated to use. As someone who's constantly asked by friends and family for tech assistance, the Mayday feature is something I would welcome in other products.

— Shackle-free phone plans.

The traditional way of buying phones: Pay \$100 or \$200 for a phone, and stay locked to your wireless carrier for two more years.

The new way: Buy or bring your own phone. Leave any time.

T-Mobile introduced that concept in March when it split the monthly phone bill into two parts — one for the device, and the other for the voice, text and data services. If you already have a device or have finished paying for it, your overall bill goes down. If you need a phone, you pay its full retail price,

spread out into monthly installments. You're no longer getting a subsidy for signing a contract, but you're also not paying for it through a higher phone bill.

A few months later, T-Mobile introduced a program that lets you upgrade your phone up to twice a year, rather than every other year. The other national carriers followed with their own contract-free, frequent-upgrade plans. AT&T also lowered its service fees for voice, text and data for those who pay for phones separately. Sprint reduced those fees as well, but only temporarily.

Some people will still find it more cost-effective to buy phones the traditional way, but these contract-free options give consumers more freedom to leave their carrier or change phones frequently.

Meanwhile, some phone makers have come out

with cheaper phones that do almost as much as the \$600-plus ones. Motorola's Moto G phone is particularly notable, at just \$179 — ideal when you pay for your own phone.

— Laptops with long-lasting batteries.

Most laptop owners no doubt have found themselves out of juice at the most inopportune times, whether in the middle of an important business meeting or the start of a super-long flight to Asia or Australia.

A new generation of processing chips from Intel makes that far less likely to happen. These chips, known as Haswell, are more efficient at using power. It's now possible to go a full waking day on a single charge, with some reasonable breaks for meals and exercise.

The 13-inch (33-centimeter) MacBook Air, for instance, promises up to 12 hours of battery life. I was able to stretch that to more than 14 hours by turning off Wi-Fi, though nine to 11 hours was more common with general Web surfing. On the Windows 8 machines I tested, I was able to get seven to nine hours consistently.

Expect to pay at least \$1,000 for a Haswell laptop, though prices may start coming down in the new year.

— Internet television.

A few friends and I dropped cable TV service this year. I saved more than \$100 a month and used some of that to buy a new TV. You might be wondering: Huh? Several options are now available for watching television over the Internet. Watching on a computer or a tablet seems unsatisfactory. □



## Stocks sideways in quiet end-of-year trading

**KEN SWEET**  
AP Markets Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The stock market ended a quiet Monday mostly where it began as investors shut their books for what has been an extraordinary year on Wall Street.

Traders had little corporate or economic news to work through. The bond market was quiet as well. The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note continued to hover near 3 percent.

The Dow Jones industrial average moved less than 30 points the entire day, the narrowest range for the index since February 2007. Approximately 2.3 billion shares changed hands on the New York Stock Exchange, 40 percent less than average. The Dow ended the day up 25.88 points, or 0.2 percent, to 16,504.29.

"The very narrow range reflects that there's not a lot of news out there and a lot of investors' positions are closed for the year," said Alec Young, chief global strategist with S&P Capital IQ. The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell less than a point to 1,841.07 and the technology-heavy Nasdaq composite fell 2.40 points, or 0.1 percent, to 4,154.20. Walt Disney rose \$1.88, or 3 percent, to \$76.23, the most in the S&P 500. Analysts at Guggenheim Securities upgraded Disney's stock to a "buy" from a "hold" on Friday.

With just one trading day left in the year, 2013 is looking to be a memorable one for investors. The S&P

500 is up 29.1 percent so far, on pace for its best year since 1997. The Dow is up 26 percent, the most since 1996.

With 2013 in the books, investors have turned their attention to the beginning of 2014. Few expect next

through will be the December jobs report, which will be released Jan. 10. There is also corporate earnings season, which will start in the second half of January. Corporate earnings will be important, particularly since this upcoming

The yield on the U.S. 10-year note fell to 2.98 percent Monday from 3 percent Friday.

The market is expected to be a holding pattern until next week, once all the mid-week holiday disruptions are over, Florance



**Specialist Neil Gallagher, foreground right, works at his post on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. The stock market ended a quiet Monday mostly where it began as investors shut their books for what has been an extraordinary year on Wall Street.**

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

year to be as good to investors as 2013 was.

"After a year like this, people start to think a 30 percent-plus year is normal," said Ron Florance, deputy chief investment officer for Wells Fargo Private Bank. "We need to be realistic going into next year."

The next big piece of news investors will have to work

season will encompass the closely watched holiday shopping period.

"The market is rallying on the idea that economic growth is picking up globally and in the U.S., so investors need to see those expectations matched," Young said. Bond yields continue to tread water around the 3 percent level.

said. Both the NYSE and the Nasdaq Stock Market will be closed Wednesday for New Year's Day.

In overseas markets, Japan's Nikkei stock index closed higher for a ninth straight day Monday. The index ended 2013 up 57 percent. Japanese markets will be closed Tuesday for New Year's Eve. □

## Cooper Tire ends Apollo buyout deal

**TOM MURPHY**  
AP Business Writer

Cooper Tire & Rubber Co. is calling off its sale to India's Apollo Tyres, unraveling a \$2.2 billion deal announced just over six months ago.

Cooper said financing is no longer available and it continues to claim, as it has for months, that Apollo breached the terms of the agreement.

Apollo said after the announcement Monday, which it called disappointing, that it may pursue legal remedies.

Both companies agreed to the sale in June, but things deteriorated rapidly. Negotiations with the union representing Cooper employees became a sticking point. Apollo sought a better price citing labor issues in China and weaker profit, which Cooper said was a stalling tactic. The Findlay, Ohio, company took its claim to a Delaware court, but a ruling last month found no breach of obligations on Apollo's part.

Cooper Chairman and CEO Roy Armes said during a brief, Monday morning webcast that Cooper never received a new offer from Apollo that came with committed financing and that presented "unreasonable risk" for his company. Company executives vowed to pursue a reverse termination fee of \$112.5 million and other possible damages. They do not believe the company owes Apollo a \$50 million termination fee that was part of the initial agreement.

Cooper will return to court with Apollo to resolve some remaining issues, including whether Apollo made an appropriate effort to reach a deal with the union, said Chief Financial Officer Brad Hughes.

Apollo Tyres Ltd. said Monday that it had made "exhaustive efforts to find a sensible way forward over the last several months." Shares of Cooper fell 20 cents to \$22.76 in late-morning trading. □

## Crocs CEO leaving as Blackstone invests \$200M

**NIWOT, Colorado (AP)** — The company that makes Crocs shoes is getting a \$200 million bailout from a private equity fund, and its CEO is retiring.

Crocs says it will use the money from Blackstone, plus cash on hand, for a \$350 million share buyback. The deal gives Crocs a cash infusion, gives Blackstone two seats on the board and preferred shares that pay a 6 percent dividend,

and gives shareholders an additional return by way of the buyback.

Crocs shares peaked above \$75 in 2007 as buyers snapped up the clogs known for being comfortable but ugly. But it hasn't been able to add new products with the same popularity.

Shares fell to around \$1 in late 2008 before beginning a recovery. In premarket trading Monday they rose

\$1.69, or almost 13 percent, to \$15.02.

Crocs also said late Sunday that CEO John McCarvel is retiring and giving up his board seat around the end of April. He has been with Crocs since 2005, and had been president and CEO since 2010. The company said it has begun an outside search for his replacement.

McCarvel called the Blackstone investment "a vote

of confidence in our company and our brand."

Crocs also said fourth-quarter revenue will be at the low end of the \$220 million to \$225 million it had predicted, and its quarterly loss will be at the worse end of the 20 cents to 23 cents per share it had predicted. Analysts surveyed by FactSet had been expecting a loss of 20 cents per share on revenue of \$222 million.



## Rise in Twitter's stock reflects exuberance in Silicon Valley

VINDU GOEL

© 2013 New York Times

**SAN FRANCISCO** - Max Ganik has no doubts that Twitter's stock - up 145 percent since it first began trading Nov. 7 - is firmly in bubble territory.

"But that doesn't mean it's going to stop going up," said Ganik, 16, a junior at a high school in Scarsdale, N.Y., who doubled his money by lunchtime on Thursday trading Twitter stock options, and planned to dive back in Monday. "Traders are going to drive up the price. The valuation doesn't actually matter at this point."

Ganik is certainly on the young side for a Twitter trader - and as a minor, he needs his mother, Dahlia, to handle the actual trades. But his sentiments help explain the mixture of hope and cynicism that has pushed up Twitter's stock by 76 percent from Dec. 1 through Thursday, then sent the shares plunging 13 percent Friday to \$63.75 - all without any changes in the company's prospects.

Although tech stocks may not have quite returned to the anything-goes era of Pets.com and TheGlobe.com, the rapid rise in Twitter's stock is a sign of the overall giddiness infecting Silicon Valley.

Internet stocks have run up sharply this year, exceeding the broad stock market's strong rally.

Venture capitalists and angel investors are flush with cash and complain that they are having trouble finding smart places to put it. Startups like the instant-messaging firm Snapchat, which turned down a buy-out offer of nearly \$3 billion in November, are remaining independent with hopes of becoming the next Twitter.

"You're starting to hear it: 'It's a new world order.' Apparently the sun is going to rise in the west because of Twitter," said Timothy Connolly, a New York money manager who teaches classes in investment analysis and has posted a steady stream of skeptical tweets about Twitter's stock. "It's



**Max Ganik, 16, trades Twitter stock options through his mother, Dahlia Ganik, at his home in New York, Dec. 28, 2013. Although tech stocks may not have quite returned to the anything-goes era of Pets.com and TheGlobe.com, the rapid rise in Twitter's stock is a sign of the overall giddiness infecting Silicon Valley.**

(Uli Seit/The New York Times)

absolutely beyond ridiculous."

Twitter, which has triple-digit revenue growth but no profits, is trading at a much higher valuation than proven Internet powerhouses like Facebook and Google.

The company has released no major news or financial information since its initial public offering that would shape investor perceptions about the company.

But that has not stopped investors' exuberance

about Twitter's potential to eventually bring in billions of dollars from advertising, coupled with Wall Street's penchant for hopping onto any fast-moving train, from propelling the shares to nosebleed levels. □

## To keep pace with rivals, JPMorgan bolstered hiring of China's elite

JESSICA SILVER-GREENBERG

© 2013 New York Times

**In a series of late-night emails, JPMorgan Chase executives in Hong Kong lamented the loss of a lucrative assignment.**

"We lost a deal to DB today because they got chairman's daughter work for them this summer," one JPMorgan investment banking executive remarked to colleagues, using the initials for Deutsche Bank. The loss of that business in 2009, coming after rival banks landed a string of other deals, stung the JPMorgan executives. For Wall Street banks enduring slowdowns in the wake of the financial crisis, China was the last great gold rush. As its economy boomed, China's state-owned enterprises were using banks to raise billions of dollars in stock and debt offerings - yet JPMorgan

was falling further behind in capturing that business. The solution, the executives decided over email, was to embrace the strategy that seemed to work so well for rivals: hire the children of China's ruling elite.

In the months and years that followed, emails and other confidential documents show, JPMorgan escalated what it called its "Sons and Daughters" hiring program, adding scores of well-connected employees and tracking how those hires translated into business deals with the Chinese government. The previously unreported emails and documents - copies of which were reviewed by The New York Times - offer a view into JPMorgan's motivations for ramping up the hiring program, suggesting that competitive pressures drove many of the bank's decisions that are now under federal investigation.



**JP Morgan Chase offices are in the building in the center, in Hong Kong, Dec. 27, 2013. Since opening a bribery investigation into JPMorgan this spring, authorities have expanded the inquiry to include hiring at other big banks.**

(Lam Yik Fei/The New York Times)

The references to other banks in the emails also paint for the first time a broad picture of questionable hiring practices by other Wall Street banks do-

ing business in China - some of them hiring the same employees with family connections. Since opening a bribery investigation into JPMorgan this spring, the

authorities have expanded the inquiry to focus on hiring at other big banks. Citigroup, Credit Suisse, Deutsche Bank, Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley have previously been identified as coming under scrutiny. A sixth bank, UBS, is also facing scrutiny, according to interviews with current and former Wall Street employees. Neither JPMorgan nor any of the other banks have been accused of wrongdoing. Still, the investigations have put Wall Street on high alert, said the current and former employees, who were not authorized to speak publicly. Some banks, they said, have adopted an unofficial hiring freeze for well-connected job candidates in China. The investigation has also had a chilling effect on JPMorgan's deal-making in China, interviews show. □



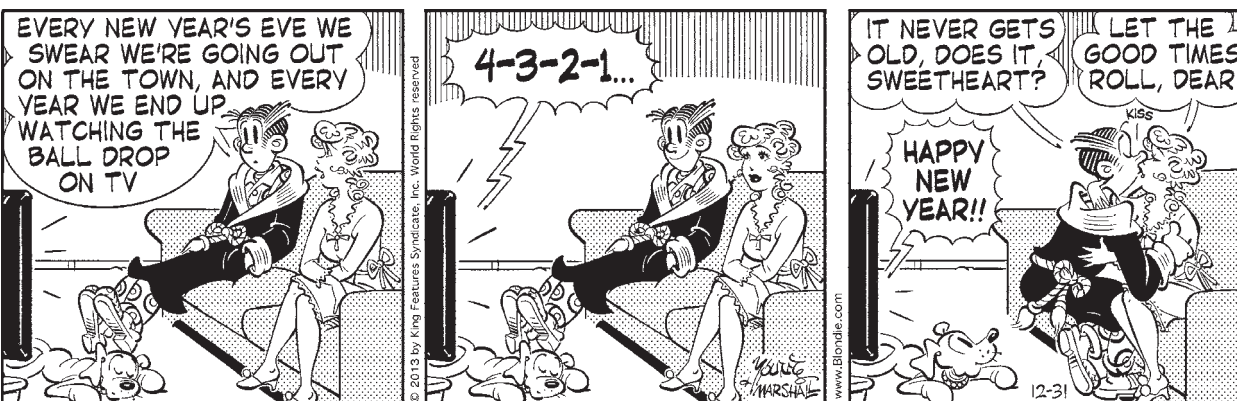
**Mutts**



**6 Chix**



**Blondie**



**Mother Goose & Grimm**



**Baby Blues**



**Zits**



**Conceptis Sudoku**

		8						3
	9			3			8	
4		9	1	7				
2	1					8	9	
	4		2			3		
	9	5				7		4
			7	5	6		3	
	3		1			4		
9				2				

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/31

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

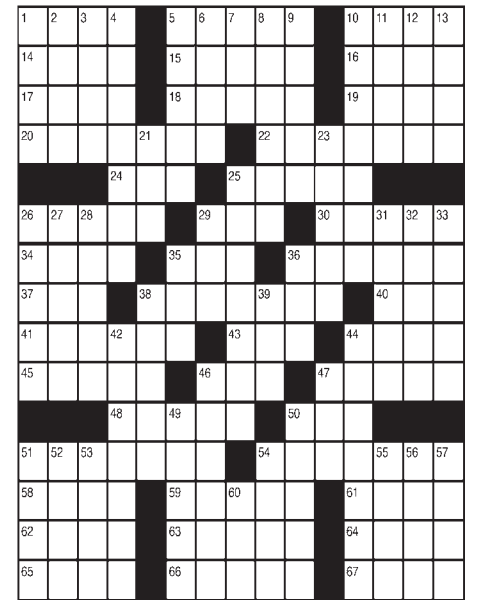
4	7	8	3	5	2	9	6	1
9	6	3	8	1	4	2	7	5
5	2	1	7	9	6	4	8	3
8	1	7	4	2	5	3	9	6
2	9	6	1	3	7	8	5	4
3	5	4	6	8	9	1	2	7
6	8	5	2	4	1	7	3	9
7	4	2	9	6	3	5	1	8
1	3	9	5	7	8	6	4	2

**ACROSS**

- 1 Trudge
- 5 Use a razor
- 10 Puncture
- 14 Easy stride
- 15 \_\_\_ off; diminish gradually
- 16 One of the Three Bears
- 17 Secondhand
- 18 Change
- 19 Chopping tools
- 20 Authentic
- 22 Song repeated
- 24 Massachusetts' Cape \_\_\_
- 25 Furniture wood
- 26 Farewell
- 29 Fistful of cash
- 30 Discontinue
- 34 Swim \_\_\_; diver's flippers
- 35 Columnist Thomas
- 36 Strip dividing a highway
- 37 "To All the Girls \_\_\_ Loved Before"
- 38 Enraged
- 40 Pass away
- 41 Tupac or Eminem
- 43 Immature flower
- 44 Steerer's place
- 45 Go into
- 46 Encountered
- 47 Full of lather
- 48 Toil
- 50 Curved edge
- 51 Not as large
- 54 Attitude
- 58 \_\_\_ off; leave
- 59 Burr or Spelling
- 61 Hit the ceiling
- 62 Leave out
- 63 Grand \_\_\_; bridge coups
- 64 Egg on
- 65 Skillets
- 66 Uptight
- 67 Church service

**DOWN**

- 1 Sink stopper
- 2 Misplace
- 3 Unlock



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews 12/31/13

**Monday's Puzzle Solved**

J	E	S	T	M	A	L	T	A	R	O	T	E			
A	V	O	W	A	B	O	I	L	E	A	R	N			
K	I	L	O	S	H	O	P	L	I	F	T	E			
E	L	I	A	T	O	P	R	U	S	E	S				
			C	O	W	E	R		H	O	T				
J	A	I	L	E	R		M	I	N	E	R	S			
E	S	T	E	S		F	R	E	D	S		H	U	N	
T	A	U	S		P	A	Y	E	E		R	E	N	O	
S	I	D		C	A	D	E	T		L	O	T		U	
			R	E	F	I	N	E		J	A	L	O	P	Y
							O	D	E		L	O	N	E	R
S	C	A	R	E			V	O	I	D					
L	A	C	E	R	A	T	I	O	N		S	C	O	T	
A	R	T	S			G	E	E	S	E		R	A	G	E
B	E	S	T			E	A	S	E	D		S	L	O	W

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- 44 Boring
- 46 Self-esteem
- 47 Envy or sloth
- 49 "Beauty and the \_\_\_"
- 50 Dishwasher cycle
- 51 Word on a red octagonal sign
- 52 One of the Three Bears
- 53 Related
- 54 May honorees
- 55 Poet Teasdale
- 56 \_\_\_ Benedict; breakfast order
- 57 Trevino's pegs
- 60 Hightailed it



# Israel likes a party but is torn about New Year's

Continued from page 27

The Romans used January 1 as the start of their year and the Catholic church later sought to give the commemoration a religious dimension, listing it in the liturgical calendar as Jesus' day of circumcision. Still, the Jews — like the Chinese — do have another calendar, and the issue has become intertwined with the ever-present, not-always-declared project of figuring out what it means to be "the Jewish state." "We treat (New Year's Eve) with jealousy and disdain. Jealousy before the world has a blast of a party. Disdain because we were not invited," wrote columnist Yossi Klein in the Haaretz newspaper. "The seclusion and the guarding of the gates are exhausting." But Rabbi Dov Lipman, an Israeli lawmaker who grew up in the U.S., said it was needed in order to "maintain the Jewish identity." That's a major concern in a country mostly founded by secular Jews seeking a national home, in which a growing religious minority is increasingly at odds with less traditional brethren, and a major festering problem in the continuing occupation of millions of Palestinians in the West Bank — some of whom, as it happens, do mark New Year's, but mostly at home or in restaurants in urban areas. "As a Jewish state we certainly want to maintain the official New Year's celebration as being Rosh Hashanah," he said, referring to the Jewish new year that is marked on the first of the month of Tishrei — which usually falls in September. Echoing a common con-

cern, Herzl Levi, manager of the Crowne Plaza in Haifa, northern Israel, said his hotel does not allow New Year's parties to avoid upsetting the supervisors that certify the hotel's kitchen as kosher. Israel's Supreme Court has ruled that kosher certificates to hotel kitchens should not be dependent on unrelated matters like the hosting of a New Year's party. Ziv Maor, a spokesman for the state-affiliated rabbinate, said he expected that would be respected. Yet the rabbinate does outline in its kosher guidelines that hotels "should not permit displays that relate to non-Jewish holidays at the end of the civil year." In an added wrinkle, many of Israel's million Russian-speaking recent immigrants consider New Year's the year's most important holiday and celebrate it like they did in the former Soviet Union, with tinsel-decorated firs that look a lot like Christmas trees and bearded New Year's character Grandpa Frost, who appears very much like Santa Claus by another name. Although New Year's Eve is one of the most unifying moments on the planet, Israel is not entirely alone in its reserve. In highly conservative Saudi Arabia, ultraconservative and influential Saudi preacher Mohammed al-Arifi wrote on his Twitter account that celebrating New Year's Eve is not as rigidly opposed as celebrating Christmas, but he also warned against celebrating either since they are non-Muslim holidays. The nearby natural gas-rich state of Qatar doesn't mark New Year's either and does not en-

courage official celebrations, but many members of the large expatriate community mark the occasion in restaurants and hotel bars. Celebrations in the Islamic Republic of Iran are muted, and are mainly marked by the largely Armenian Christian minority of about 100,000. Still, state TV typically mentions the celebrations happening elsewhere in the world. There are other non-Christian territories that mark New Year's Day as a public holiday, including Taiwan, Communist China and the Islamic sultanate of Brunei. In Nigeria, which is about equally divided between Muslims and Christians, Jan. 1 is a public holiday, though Muslim groups have been demanding that the government declare the first day of the Islamic Hijrah calendar as a public holiday. □

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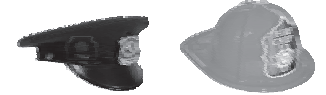
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Dec. 31 Dr. Cayama  
Jan. 1 Dr. Dassen



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POLIS	581-1100
ORANJESTAD	582-4000
NOORD	587-0009
STA. CRUZ	585-4710
SAVANETA	584-7000
SAN NICOLAS	584-5000
FIRE DEPT.	115
FIRE DEPT.	582-1108
POLIS TIPLINE	11141
HOSPITAL	527-4000
AMBULANCE	582-1234
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AMBULANCE	584-5050

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S. NICOLAS: San Nicolas Tel: 584-5712

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SETAR	582-2116
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TAXI-TAS	587-5900
PROF. TAXI	588-0035
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# U.S. announces test sites for drone aircraft

**MICHELLE RINDELS**

**Associated Press**

**LAS VEGAS (AP)** — The U.S. government announced six states on Monday that will develop test sites for drones, a critical next step for the march of the unmanned aircraft into American skies.

Alaska, Nevada, New York, North Dakota, Texas and Virginia will host the research sites, providing diverse climates, geography and air traffic environments, Federal Aviation Administration administrator Michael Huerta said.

Drones have been mainly used by the military, but governments, businesses, farmers and others are making plans to join the market. Many universities are starting or expanding drone programs.

The Federal Aviation Administration does not currently allow commercial use of drones, but it is working to develop operational guidelines by the end of 2015, although officials concede the project may take longer than expected.

The FAA projects some 7,500 commercial drones could be aloft within five years of getting widespread access to American airspace.

Representatives from winning states were jubilant about the FAA announcement and the likelihood that the testing will draw companies interested in cashing in on the fledgling industry.

"This is wonderful news for Nevada that creates a huge opportunity for our economy," said U.S. Sen. Harry Reid from Nevada, a Democrat.

U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer,



This Sept. 2013 file photo shows The Reaper drone, now known as a Global Hawk, at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

**Associated Press**

a New York Democrat, called the announcement a "slam dunk" for central and northern New York.

The competition for a test site was robust, Huerta said, as 25 entities in 24 states submitted proposals. At least one of the six sites chosen will be up and running within 180 days, while the others are expected to come online in quick succession, he said during a conference call with reporters.

The designations don't come with a financial award from the government.

While selecting the sites, the FAA considered geography, climate, ground infrastructure, research needs, airspace use, aviation experience and risk.

In choosing Alaska, the FAA cited a diverse set of test site locations in seven climatic zones.

New York's site at Griffiss International Airport will look into integrating drones into the congested northeast airspace.

Nevada offered proximity to military aircraft from several bases.

Tests will determine whether drones can detect and avoid obstacles — including other aircraft — and whether they can operate safely when they lose contact with their operators.

"These test sites will give us valuable information about how best to ensure the safe introduction of this advanced technology into our nation's skies," Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx said in a statement. An industry-commissioned study has predicted more

than 70,000 jobs would develop in the first three years after Congress loosens drone restrictions on U.S. skies.

The same study projects an average salary range for a drone pilot between \$85,000 and \$115,000.

North Dakota Sen. John Hoeven said the designation positions his state as a northern hub for unmanned systems and should attract students, researchers and aerospace technology companies.

The growing drone industry has critics among conservatives and liberals.

Giving drones greater access to U.S. skies moves the nation closer to "a surveillance society in which our every move is monitored, tracked, recorded and scrutinized by the authorities," the American Civil Liberties Union declared in

a report last December.

Sen. Rand Paul, a Republican from Kentucky, introduced a bill that would prohibit drones from checking for criminal or regulatory violations without a warrant. "I just don't like the concept of drones flying over barbecues in New York to see whether you have a Big Gulp in your backyard or whether you are separating out your recyclables according to the city mandates," Paul said in an interview, referring to a New York City ban on supersized soft drinks.

Huerta said his agency is sensitive to privacy concerns involving drones. Test sites must have a written plan for data use and retention and will be required to conduct an annual review of privacy practices that involves public comment. □

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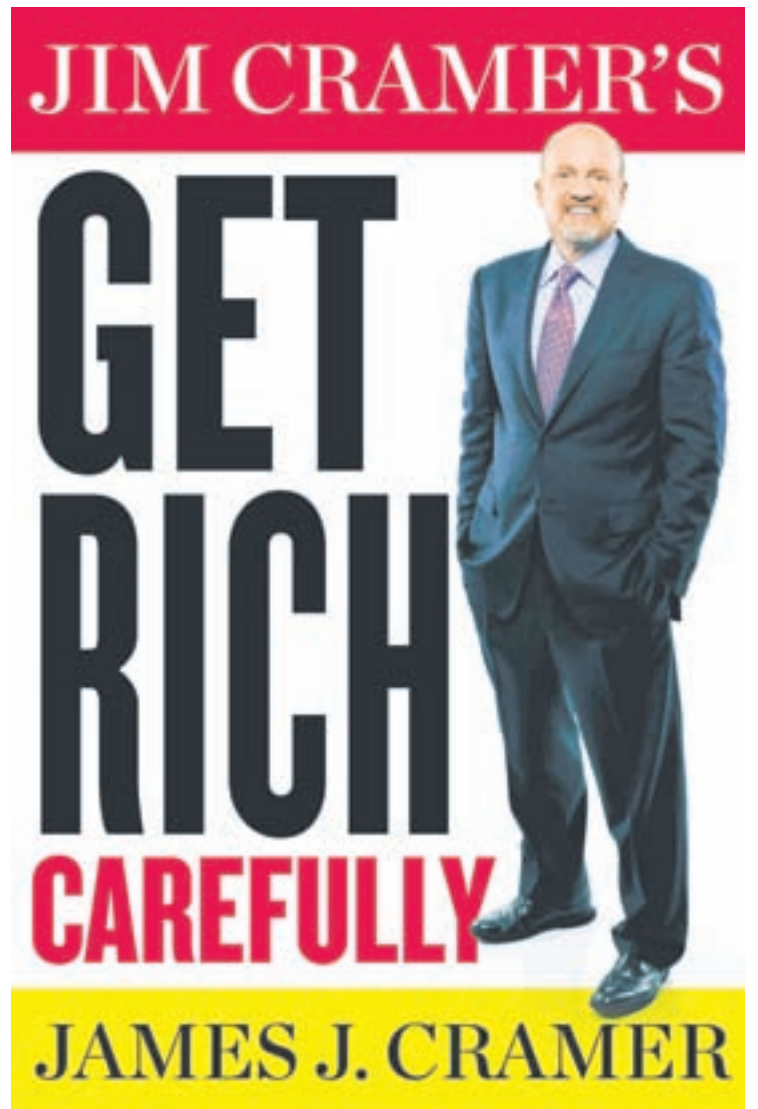


## Book argues it's possible to 'Get Rich Carefully'

JESSICA GRESKO  
Associated Press

Who wouldn't want to "Get Rich Carefully," as the title of Jim Cramer's new book promises? The stock market may seem scary, but Cramer says you can make money with research, logic and prudence. That sounds good to me. Readers may know Cramer as a co-anchor of CNBC's "Squawk on the Street" or from his weekday stocks show "Mad Money," which recently passed the 2,000 episode mark. Since 2005, the former hedge fund manager has been dispensing advice on "Mad Money" in a high-octane style that can make him sound like an animated sports coach, one who makes liberal use of a sound board of noises including the sound of a train wreck, a gong and a chorus singing "hallelujah." Cramer is also a prolific author. His books include "Jim Cramer's Getting Back to Even," "Jim Cramer's Real Money: Sane Investing in an Insane World" and "Jim Cramer's Mad Money: Watch TV, Get Rich." In "Get Rich Carefully," he makes the pitch that you can get wealthy by being careful and methodical. He starts, patiently enough, by talking about the forces that move a stock's price. And he tells you which quarterly earnings calls will help you understand the landscape of the market. For example, heavy equipment company Caterpillar can help you take the pulse of the world's economies.

Disney can tell you about the state of the U.S. consumer. And home builder Toll Brothers can tell you not just about the demand for housing but also about how hard or easy it is to get credit. He also explains why the breakup of a company can be good for its stock and what information people shouldn't base their trades on, including news of a big contract win, the minutes of Federal Reserve meetings, and the Securities and Exchange Commission filings of big-time investors. Most interesting to me was a chapter on CEOs where Cramer talks about 21 company heads he likes, men and women he's betting on as much as their companies. Most of the companies and some of the CEOs are well known, including Bob Iger at Disney, Howard Schultz at Starbucks and Indra Nooyi at PepsiCo. But before I read Cramer's book, I didn't know anything about Sandy Cutler at Eaton, a power management company, or Debra Cafaro at Ventas, which owns senior housing communities and other health care properties. Whether Cramer's advice will make you a boatload of money or not, his rational explanations make stocks seem less intimidating. I read most of the book with my cellphone handy, looking up current and historical stock prices as he talked about companies. That doesn't mean Cramer has persuaded me to invest. I haven't bought anything yet. □



This book cover image released by Blue Rider Press shows "Get Rich Carefully," by James J. Cramer. Associated Press

## Catch your own dinner with Driftwood! Motto at Driftwood Restaurant: "from the pier to your plate!"



**ORANJESTAD** - The downtown marina is home of Driftwood Fishing Charters, the successful fisherman of the established seafood restaurant Driftwood in Oranjestad. Driftwood owner Herby

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# NBC's 'Today' show returns to glory days



This image released by NBC shows, from left, guest hosts, Jane Pauley, and Bryant Gumbel with host Matt Lauer on NBC News' "Today" show, Monday, Dec. 30, 2013 in New York.

Associated Press

**DAVID BAUDER**  
AP Television Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The glory days returned for the "Today" show — for one day at least — as NBC's morning show brought back Bryant Gumbel and Jane Pauley for a one-day nostalgia turn as co-hosts on Monday.

Gumbel and Pauley, who worked together on "Today" from 1982 to 1989, joined birthday boy Matt Lauer on the set. It wasn't ceremonial: with Savannah Guthrie and Natalie Morales off, Gumbel and

Pauley had to work. "Getting up was a little difficult and the studio has changed enormously," Gumbel said. Pauley said the fast pace makes the experience go "like a bat out of heck." NBC hoped the trio's easy camaraderie enticed viewers. After a well-publicized tumble last year, the show runs second in the ratings to ABC's "Good Morning America." Pauley, who does occasional reports for the show, left as host in 1989 while Gumbel gave way to Lauer in 1997.

There were a few film clips of Pauley back in the big hair days. "I understand Gene Shalit's standing by to review 'Back to the Future,'" Al Roker quipped during a weather segment. Gumbel and Pauley easily navigated a cooking segment (poached salmon and pasta). That was like old times, but the segment on what is trending on Twitter wasn't.

Not everyone's memory was clear. A sign held up by a fan outside the studio misspelled Gumbel's name. □



U.S. rock band Bon Jovi performs during "Because We Can" tour in Melbourne, Australia, Saturday, Dec. 7, 2013.

Associated Press

## Bon Jovi has year's top-grossing global tour

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Bon Jovi not only has the year's top tour, but the rock band has achieved a career high.

The New Jersey-based act's worldwide tour grossed \$259.5 million this year, topping Pollstar's annual top 20 list and setting a record for the band itself.

Beyonce is second with \$188.6 million. She ended her tour last week in Brooklyn, New York. Pink, Justin Bieber, and Bruce Springsteen round out the top five.

The global concert business scored a record year with the top 20 tours, earning \$2.43 billion in primary ticket sales. It generated \$1.96 billion last year.

The top 20 list also included Taylor Swift, Elton John, Rihanna, Depeche Mode and One Direction. The Rolling Stones' comeback tour ranked twelfth, a notch under Paul McCartney. □

# Carly Rae Jepsen heads to Broadway next year

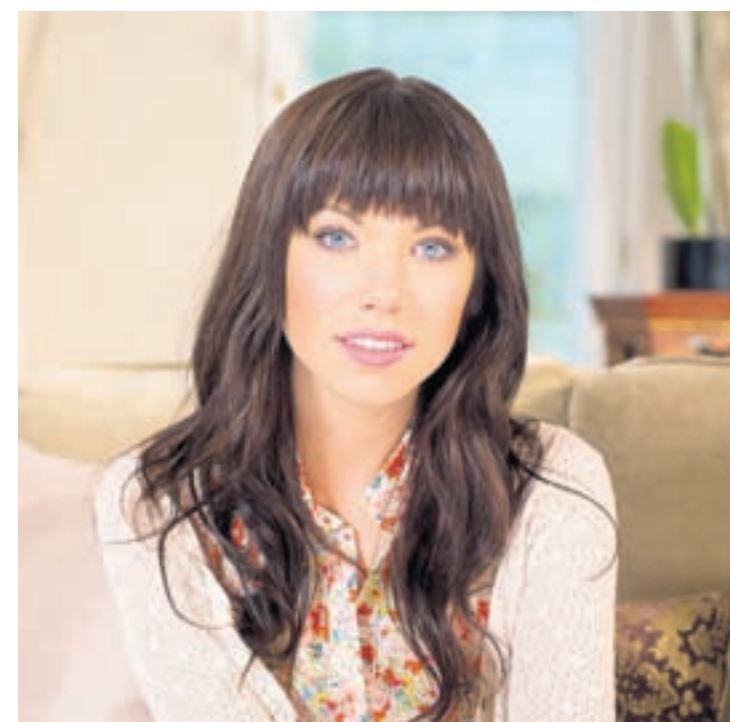
**MARK KENNEDY**  
AP Drama Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — "Call Me Maybe" singer Carly Rae Jepsen has had her calls returned by Broadway. Producers of "Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella" said Sunday that the Cana-

dian singer-songwriter will take over the role of Cinderella starting Feb. 4 for 12 weeks. She'll take over from Tony Award nominee Laura Osnes. The Grammy Award nominee began performing in musical theater in high school. She

starred in "Annie," "The Wiz" and "Grease" before attending the Canadian College of Performing Arts. She'll join the cast alongside Fran Drescher playing Cinderella's stepmother. Drescher is an Emmy Award winner for "The Nanny" and takes over Harriet Harris' role.

The Tony-nominated musical has been given a makeover by Douglas Carter Beane, who has turned the fairy tale into a charming, witty story updated for a new generation. □



This photo taken April 19, 2012 shows Canadian singer, Carly Rae Jepsen, posing for photographs following an APTN interview at the Landmark Hotel, London.

Associated Press





## Confessions Of A Columnist



ROSS DOUTHAT  
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In ancient Sanskrit, the word "pundit" meant "wise man" or "religious sage." In modern English, it means "often wrong, rarely accountable." There are ways that those of us who scribble about politics can avoid living down to that reputation - by keeping our predictions vague (it worked for Nostradamus), by sticking to sure things (I told you Herman Cain wouldn't be elected president) or by deploying weasel words like "it's possible that ..." at every opportunity. But time, chance and fallibility eventually make false prophets of us all.

Still, where wisdom fails, self-criticism is useful. For the last four years, David Weigel, a political writer for the online magazine Slate, has subjected himself to a "pundit audit," looking back on his worst predictions and explaining what went wrong. It's a good idea, and so I'm stealing it this week and highlighting my three biggest analytic errors of 2013 before the year is shown the door.

1. In Boehner I trusted. I kicked off last January with a column hailing John Boehner, the much-maligned speaker of the House, as an "American hero" who deserved more credit than he was getting for averting shutdowns, debt-ceiling debacles and a fiscal cliff-jump in 2011 and 2012. Looking ahead to another round of budget battles, I suggested Americans should be grateful that "the speaker who prevented dysfunction from producing disaster last time is around to try again."

Technically that column didn't make any predictions, but it radiated an optimism that turned out to be unwarranted. The speaker did try again, but this time he failed, first getting roundly outmaneuvered by Ted Cruz and then accepting an awesomely self-destructive shutdown in the hopes that it would break his party's fever.

There are things to be said in Boehner's defense, and still-worse scenarios that his acceptance of the shutdown may have helped avoid. But he still presided over an epic debacle, which would have defined the year in politics if the Obamacare rollout hadn't come along to save Republicans from themselves. A year ago, I expected the speaker to avoid that kind of disaster. I was wrong.

2. I underestimated Pope Francis - or misread the media. In columns pegged to Pope Benedict's unexpected retirement and Jorge Mario Bergoglio's elevation to the papacy, I made two claims: first, that a new

"Catholic moment" in American life could "only be made by Americans themselves," and second, that the new pope's "evocative name" and "humble posture" wouldn't be sufficient to repair the church's image absent concrete steps to extend accountability for the sex-abuse scandal to the upper reaches of the hierarchy.

Given the subsequent media fascination with Francis, my attempt to minimize the papacy's importance in American religious life may have been somewhat premature. More important, I was entirely wrong about the Vatican's image being inextricably tied to the legacy of the sex-abuse crisis. To date, the new pope has done much less than the underappreciated Benedict on that front, but nobody in the Western press seems to care: Even as American bishops continue to mishandle abuse cases, Francis' blend of charisma, asceticism and inclusivity have been sufficient to reverse a decade of bad press for Catholicism.

In a way, I'm grateful to have been wrong, since the message and mission of the church deserve as much attention as the continuing blindness of some bishops. But that blindness still needs to be addressed, and it's troubling, and telling, that the media would give a more liberal-seeming pope a pass on an issue they hammered his predecessor on at every opportunity. And if I'd been just a little more cynical about these things, I probably would have seen it coming.

3. I made too much of the Syria debate. When it looked as if the White House might lose a vote authorizing a bombing campaign against Bashar Assad, I argued that a congressional defeat would "basically finish off" President Barack Obama "as a credible actor on the world stage," putting us on "a long, hard, dangerous road to January 2017."

This prediction was overtaken by events when Vladimir Putin offered the White House a face-saving way out. But even though the fateful vote never took place, my apocalyptic tone was unwarranted and overwrought. Not that the Syria debate wasn't bad for the administration's credibility. But in hindsight I'm not sure a lost vote would have made the damage that much worse.

One of the bad habits of pundits is to perpetually look for Grand Turning Points, moments after which Nothing Is the Same, to impose an artificial order on the messiness of political reality. Such moments sometimes do exist: the botched Obamacare rollout, for instance, still feels like a potentially crucial inflection point for the president's domestic credibility. But where the White House's foreign policy is concerned, the Syria resolution debate looks smaller the further it recedes, and I made more of it than it deserved.

Here endeth the self-criticism. Happy almost-New Year, and here's to an infallible 2014. □



## Greeting The New Year



CHARLES M. BLOW  
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This is the season of lists: roundups and recaps, forecasts and resolutions.

What was the biggest story of the year? Snowden.

The best movie? "12 Years a Slave."

The splashiest pop culture moment? Twerk, Miley!

Will the health care rollout roll over the president's second-term agenda? Who'll win in 2016? Who are the people to watch? Can Pope Francis top his 2013 cool points?

We resolve to go back to the gym and lose a few pounds, to pay off that credit card debt and up our savings, and to tell that overbearing boss to "chill out!"

I must say that as corny as it all is, I'm always entertained by it. In fact, "entertained" may be too mild a word. I'm enthralled by it, mostly because I connect with the more profound undercurrent of the moment: the idea of marking endings and beginnings, the ideas of commemoration and anticipation.

For that reason, the new year has always been my favorite time of the year.

When I was growing up, we had our own rural, Southern ways to mark it. Some folks spent New

Year's Eve at watch night church services, singing and praying and testifying. My brothers and I spent ours in front of the television, waiting for the ball to drop in Times Square. Then, as the clock struck midnight and folks on television kissed and cheered and celebrated in a blizzard of confetti, we stepped outside to listen as old men blasted shotguns into the perfect darkness of the Louisiana night sky. Finally, we ate black-eyed peas (for good luck) and cooked greens (for good fortune). As the saying went, "Eat poor on New Year's, and eat fat the rest of the year." Things didn't always work out that way, but hope was always heavy in the bowls of those old spoons.

To me, New Year's was always a time of lightness and optimism in a world full of darkness. Anything could be, no matter what had been.

I never really made resolutions when I was young. But the older I've gotten, the more I've felt that resolutions are necessary, as much for the forced articulation of goals as for the setting of them. So this year, these are my resolutions:

1. To stop treating politicians like sports stars, political parties like teams and our national debate like sport.

Politics is not a game. There are real lives hanging in the balance of the decisions made - or not made - by those in power. Often, those with the most to lose as a result of a poor policy move are the most vulnerable and most marginalized. Those folks need a voice, and I will endeavor to be that voice.

2. To force politicians to remember, with as much force and fervor as my pen can muster, that they are servants, not rulers.

A democracy is a government by the people, for the people.

Politicians too often bend in the presence of power. They believe that it is they who possess power, rather than the people who elected them. And power and money are kissing cousins; you will rarely find one not cozied up to the other. Money is corruptive, and power addictive. Together they work against the greater good. That cannot stand.

3. To remember that justice is a natural aching of human morality.

In the core of most people is an overwhelming desire to see others treated fairly and dealt with honestly. That is not a party-line impulse but a universal one. I will do my best to highlight that basic quality. For instance, I believe that there will come a time when we will all look back at the brouhaha over same-sex marriage in disbelief and disgrace, and ask: Why was that even a debate?

4. To focus more fully on the power and beauty of the human spirit.

Regardless of their politics, the vast majority of the people I meet, when they can speak and listen and act of their own accord and not in concert with a group, are good, decent and caring people. Most work hard or want to.

They love their families and like their neighbors. They will give until it hurts. They fall down, but they bounce back. They are just real people, struggling to get a bit and get by, and hoping to share a laugh and a hug with an honest heart or two along the way. That is no small observation and not one of little consequence. I believe that I can write more about those traits.

Those are my resolutions, ones I will strive to keep, ones I'll reflect on even if I fall short. What are yours?

Happy New Year. □



# Ready, Set, Hike! A Trial Trek To Metlife Stadium

**JAMES BARRON**

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**RUTHERFORD, N.J.** - The officials planning Super Bowl XLVIII want it to be the Super Bowl of public transportation. They are not just discouraging fans from walking to MetLife Stadium on game day in February - they are forbidding it. The only way in will be through a security perimeter, and there will be nowhere to enter the security perimeter on foot.

That prompted a question: Could you walk there? And, even if you could, would you want to?

Santas compete for space with New York Jets signs. MetLife Stadium can be seen from his backyard. His wife said that in warm weather, they can hear the rock concerts at the stadium. But walk there?

"You're off your rocker," Airey said.

He confirmed something I had already figured out: You cannot walk there from here in a straight line.

"You can't walk on Route 3 because there's no sidewalk," Airey said. "You can't walk on 17 because that's a highway. If you do it on Feb. 2 at 6 o'clock

of the world."

I, too, heard the éclat of the world. Route 17, a few hundred yards behind Airey's house, is noisy. I also heard the éclat of my calf-high winter boots, crunching on icy sidewalks. Anyone who followed in my size 9 1/2 D footsteps would probably want my unusually long, unusually warm parka and would probably wish for what I wished for: the shortest route, two miles from Airey's backyard straight to the stadium.

But that would mean dodging 50-mph traffic on Route 17. Then I would have to

The stadium itself got a score of only 20 (on a 0-100 scale) from Walk Score, a company that uses algorithms to compile lists of walkable places. Walk Score's chief executive, Josh Herst, told me later on the phone from Seattle that recent Super Bowl sites had been more accessible. The Superdome in New Orleans, where the last Super Bowl was played, has a score of 80. The 2012 site, Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, has a 72.

I wondered if walkers in those places encountered what I encountered: A

vault big enough to hold \$60 billion in cash.

And, across a bridge, the Meadowlands. The author Robert Sullivan described it as a place of identifiable birds and unidentified bodies. I saw only a few birds and no bodies, and a sunset that was hauntingly beautiful as I tramped on.

It took 17 minutes and a couple of turns to go from Airey's house to a block dominated by a five-story apartment building. A commenter on an online real estate forum said, providing clarification parenthetically, that this was "not a great location (I'd call it ugly, not the building, just the surroundings)," and added, "Train tracks and Rt. 17 are your backyard."

"Your neighbors are Wendy's, Arby's, Burger King and Popeye's, 2 gas stations, gym and a cleaners," the commenter said.

But Tiffany Tamburo, a real estate broker whose name was on a sign on the building, told me that two-bedroom apartments there were renting for \$2,500 a month for February. "You couldn't just take a week or two," she said. "You'd have to do a whole month."

I walked up a hill to the Rutherford railroad station, arriving as a New Jersey Transit train pulled in. Anna Scala, the woman who bakes the cakes for dogs, crossed the tracks just after it departed.

I asked whether she knew anyone who had walked to the stadium.

"New Jersey people don't like to walk from the curb to a restaurant," Scala said.

After a quick right turn and a few more steps, I was at a bus stop in front of a high school, Henry P. Becton Regional High School. Reysa Lamourtte's New Jersey Transit bus arrived. She offered encouragement as she climbed aboard.

"You can make it," she told me. "It's not that far away. Like, 30 minutes."

Actually, it took an hour. From an icy bridge over Berry's Creek, the stadium looked no bigger than it did from Airey's house. But I was getting closer. □



Reporter James Barron nears MetLife Stadium after setting off from Rutherford to see if it might be possible to walk to the site of the upcoming Super Bowl in East Rutherford, N.J., in December, 2013. Even if the NFL allows local residents to walk to the Super Bowl, it wouldn't be easy.

(Bryan Thomas/The New York Times)

It was a cold December afternoon when I set out. For a starting point, I chose what maps suggested was the nearest residential neighborhood to the stadium, an enclave of small suburban colonials on a hillside not far from one of the busiest highway interchanges in the New York area. The dashboard thermometer read 20 degrees when I parked a couple of blocks from John Airey's house on a street where front-yard

at night, you'll be freezing your bones off. And unless you're paying \$9 for beer at the stadium, you're going to take your cooler with you, right?"

Oops. I forgot the cooler, but it would actually be smart to leave it at home on Feb. 2, the day of the game, because coolers, too, will not be permitted. Now I remembered a line from Walt Whitman: "As I walk, solitary, unattended,

around me I hear that éclat

negotiate railroad freight lines and a body of water identified on a map as Berry's Creek. Wade across? Swim across? The Environmental Protection Agency says it has some of the highest levels of mercury of any body of freshwater in the United States.

So I followed a 3.1-mile route prescribed by Google Maps that came with a warning: "Use caution - this route may be missing sidewalks or pedestrian paths."

woman who bakes cakes for dogs. A man in a bar I walked into when I thought I was lost who jumped off his bar stool with too much enthusiasm - he must have started drinking hours before I started walking. A bartender in another restaurant who told me later that she did not care for sports and was rooting for only one outcome on Super Bowl Sunday, big tips. The street leading to where the Federal Reserve has a